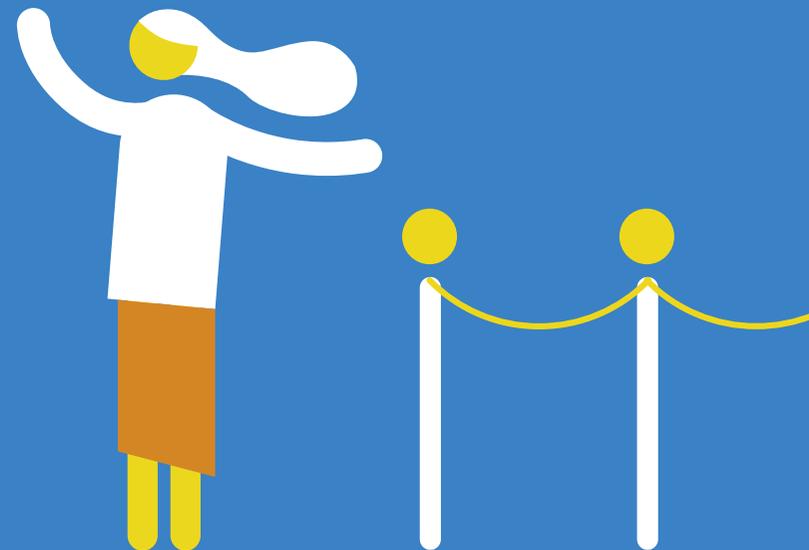# Welcome youth participation enthusiasts!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

ARE YOU CURIOUS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION'S YOUTH PROGRAMMES OFFER?

ARE YOU WONDERING WHERE AND HOW TO BEGIN?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you are reading the right publication!

The European Union is set, among other aims and objectives, to encourage youth participation in democratic life in Europe[1]. The ☁ EU Youth Strategy places high emphasis on youth participation, and it is one of the eleven key priorities outlined as ☁ European Youth Goals by young people active in the EU Youth Dialogue.

To put those policies in practice, the ☁ Erasmus+ and ☁ European Solidarity Corps programmes ('the EU youth programmes') have, among their objectives, *enhancing youth participation in democratic life*. A strategy for enhancing youth participation in democratic life through the youth programmes was developed by the ☁ SALTO Participation & Information Resource Centre [2] following a consultation process in 2019 and 2020. The ☁ Youth Participation Strategy defines what youth participation in democratic life is and identifies ways in which EU youth programmes can support it. This toolkit is an additional resource to accompany the ☁ Youth Participation Strategy. The toolkit is for all those that enable and foster youth participation and are interested in doing so through the EU youth programmes. It provides practical ideas and guidance to the community of practice in their efforts to foster youth participation and in taking on board the ideas, concepts and good practices for participation that the youth participation strategy presents.

SALTO PI has also created an online platform for participation resources, the Participation Resource Pool. This site brings together valuable information and resources in three main areas: *Youth Participation; Media, Information & Critical thinking and Promotion & Outreach.* The Participation Resource Pool is an important resource for this Toolkit and will be referenced throughout.

[1] Embedded in Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

[2] It is a knowledge hub for networking the European Union youth policy and programmes and young people, their organisations, and people who work to support them
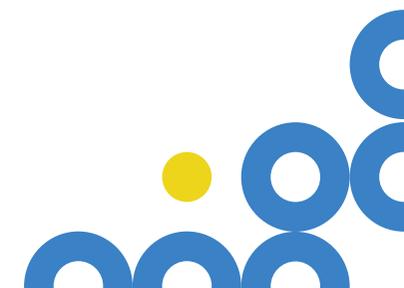
What is in this module?

In this module, you will find a step by step guide on how the toolkit is built, and what is in it. This module is the introduction. It is intended to help you understand how you can use it to support the participation of young people.

This module addresses the following questions:

1. Who is this toolkit for?

2. How is this toolkit built?

3. What is in this toolkit?

4. What can you use this toolkit for?

We invite you to dive right in and find out more about how the European Union youth funding schemes and their support mechanisms can help you to support the participation of young people.
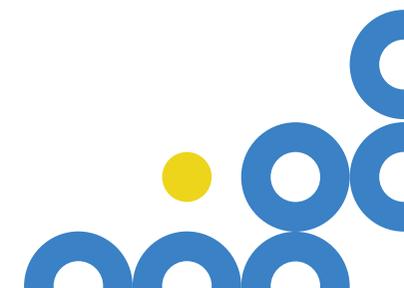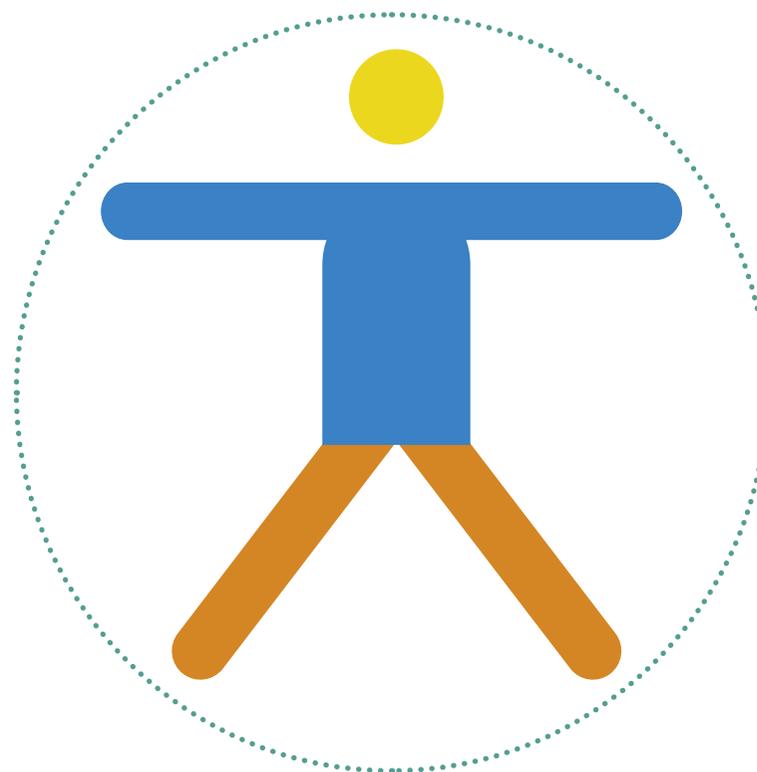
Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is for all those that enable and foster youth participation and are interested in doing so through the EU youth programmes!

You might be the leader of a youth group, a youth worker in a youth centre, on the board of a youth organisation, a peer educator, the representative of other young people, a trainer or simply someone working to get other young people involved in an active way in their communities.

This toolkit is for those interested in

- developing an understanding of youth participation theory and concepts and/or

- improving the quality of the thinking and practice on youth participation and/or

- building experience in implementing youth participation and/or

- using Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes to support young people's participation and/or

- accessing resources and additional information about youth participation in the context of the EU youth programmes.

How is this toolkit built?

This toolkit aims to improve and develop practice, rather than give "best" practice advice. The information outlined in it will help you to consider young people and their participation needs more. This will help you to make informed choices that make sense for the specific context. Using the toolkit will support you in developing thinking and practice on youth participation that is guided by the values of youth participation promoted by the European institutions, through the 👁 EU Youth Strategy, in general, and through the 👁 Youth Participation Strategy, specifically.

For this reason, this toolkit is built on three core principles:

First, it is *MODULAR*. Each module focuses on a different topic, but is presented in a similar format for ease of use. Each module is usable as a freestanding resource, and all 12 combine to form a toolkit for specific types of actions/projects of EU youth programmes. The content is presented in both online and offline formats.
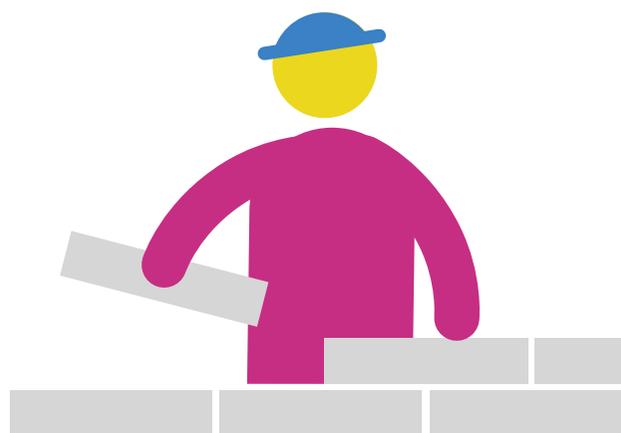
Second, all the modules are *PARTICIPATION PRACTICE FOCUSED*, linking directly to the EU youth programmes. This means that the largest part of the content of each module is about how to enhance participation using the opportunities provided by Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. At the same time, each module also presents ideas and concepts of youth participation. This 'theoretical foundation' will help you to better understand the practical guidance on developing participation experiences for young people that it provides. The concept of participation presented in this guide is directly informed by the Youth Participation Strategy mentioned above.

Third, all modules address three issues of importance for youth participation today: *INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY.* To be real and meaningful for young people, participation experiences must be sensitive to diversity, accessible to all and inclusive of all young people, no matter their background, social situation, level of opportunity, ability or disability. Digitalisation affects every aspect of life, including participation; therefore, each module will address how youth participation workers can use digital tools and methods to enhance the participation experiences of the young people they are working with. Each module also provides tools for self-assessment that can help youth participation workers think about how the participation experiences they are developing can not only avoid doing harm to the environment, but also contribute constructively to climate goals and sustainability.

Furthermore, the toolkit is developed on the basis of a premise that the participatory approach works well when built from the level of an individual young person and local youth group and when carried and transferred onwards to international projects that involve the cooperation of more young people/youth groups. Projects under Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps are often precisely about connecting two or more local groups of participants from different countries, with one group leading the project.

What is in this toolkit?

This toolkit comprises 12 modules with this introduction.

⊚ Module 2: **What is youth participation?** This module provides an introduction to the main concepts of participation that have been developed as part of the SALTO PI Participation Strategy.

⊚ Module 3: **Promoting participation for all.** This module develops ideas about how participation can be accessible, inclusive and sensitive to the diversity of young people.

⊚ Module 4: **Learning by doing.** This module discusses learning by doing as a basis for young people to develop participation competence.

⊚ Module 5: **Young people leading projects.** This module develops ideas about how young people can lead within projects, thereby gaining meaningful participation experiences.

⊚ Module 6: **Creating change with projects.** This module reflects on change. How do participation projects contribute to positive change in society? How can change projects improve the participation experience of young people?

⊚ Module 7: **Mobility projects for young people.** This module looks specifically at how to implement a participation dimension in Key Action 1 mobility projects, namely youth exchanges.

⊚ Module 8: **Youth participation activities.** This module outlines what it takes to make a Key Action 1 participation project meaningful for participating young people.

⊚ Module 9: **Discover EU.** This module reflects on how to enhance the Discover EU programme and the opportunities it offers young people to travel and experience Europe with participation experiences.

⊚ Module 10: **Solidarity Projects**. This module considers the link between participation and solidarity and how to integrate a participation dimension into Solidarity Projects.

⊚ Module 11: **Volunteering.** This module presents ideas about how to develop a participation dimension in European Solidarity Corps volunteering activities.

⊚ Module 12: **Planning for participation.** This module suggests some practical tools for planning the integration of participation into projects.

What can you use this toolkit for?

This toolkit will provide you with information, tools and access to further reference material about participation concepts, the EU youth programmes and the opportunities they offer you for enabling and fostering youth participation.

You will also find guidance that can help you to think about youth participation and your practice critically, and to improve its relevance and effectiveness - in other words, its quality.

You can use the ideas and tools in this toolkit to develop your own experience of implementing youth participation in specific activities and projects with young people, and to evaluate these activities and projects.

And, you can gain access to resources that can help you to utilise the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to support the participation of young people, whether by applying to do a project or by gaining access to new partners and networks.
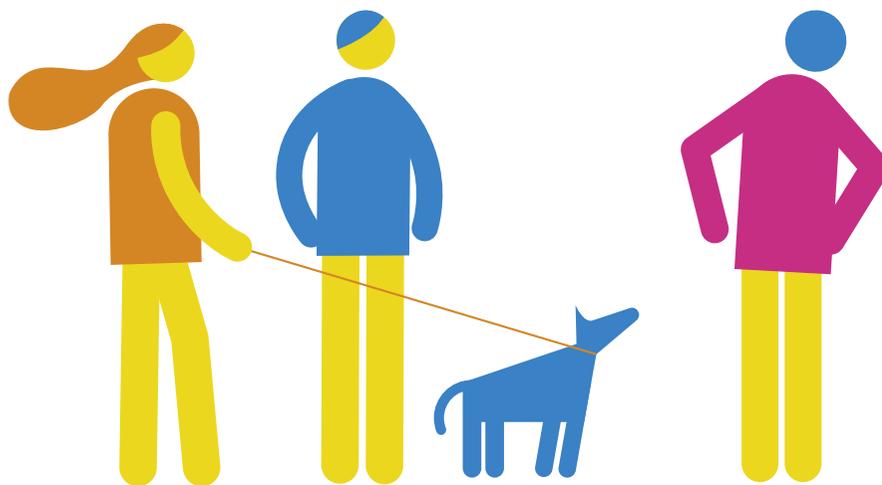
Where can you find more information?

This toolkit has the potential to act as a gateway for you to get to know more about youth participation and the EU youth programmes that support young people. Each module links to specific resources that lead to further information, inspiration and know-how.

In particular, we recommend that you make use of the complementary resources available on the 🛜 SALTO PI Participation Resource Pool.

On that site, you can find more information about the participation opportunities offered by the EU youth programmes through the 🛜 Participation Resource Pool, such as:

The Programme Guides for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps explaining which opportunities the programmes offer and how to apply;

Contacts for the 🛜 National Agencies who manage the implementation of the programme in each participating country;

Furthermore, you can access 🛜 A Glossary of Terms and definitions important for youth participation work.

Acknowledgements

What is Youth Participation?

"Youth participation in democratic life is about individual young people and groups of young people having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, contribute to and influence societal decision-making on matters affecting them, and be active within the democratic and civic life of our communities."[1]

Youth participation is about **ACTION** and **VOICE.**
A participation project can focus on both of these things, or just one of them.

VOICE - Young people expressing their views to decision makers (such as politicians, policy makers, head teachers or community leaders). The aim is to encourage decision makers to make changes based on young people's views.

ACTION - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them. Rather than asking decision makers to make the change, young people lead the change themselves.

[1]Definition of youth participation taken from the SALTO PI (2020) ⊚ Youth Participation Strategy, Tallinn

There are different forms of youth participation:

Traditional forms of participation. These include voting, standing for election, joining a trade union, youth councils, youth forums, school councils and some types of youth organisation.

Traditional forms of participation are based on the principle of representative democracy.

Alternative forms of participation.
Everything *other* than traditional forms, including:

- ✓ Campaign movements and youth activism, especially based around single issues or causes, like the environmental movement.

- ✓ Participation projects based on digital tools and digital spaces or communities. Co-production and co-management, where young people and decision makers share responsibility for creating or running something.

- ✓ Deliberative democracy projects, where young people work collaboratively with policy makers to create new ideas.

- ✓ Young people finding new ways to use public and community spaces, like opening a community café.

- ✓ And many other things...

Focusing on: Forms of participation

Across Europe, there is a concern that young people do not take part in traditional forms of participation as much as previous generations. In general, young people are less likely to vote compared to older people, and have lower trust in institutions such as parliaments, governments and political parties. However, young people are not disinterested in politics. Many are still very active in alternative forms of participation.

To promote youth participation, there is a need to:

1) Encourage more young people to take part in traditional forms of participation, and,

2) Find ways to make better use of alternative forms of participation in our democracies.

Both of these things can help young people to have a voice and be active in our democracies.
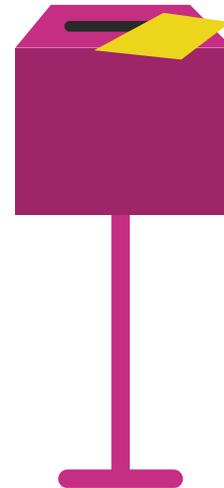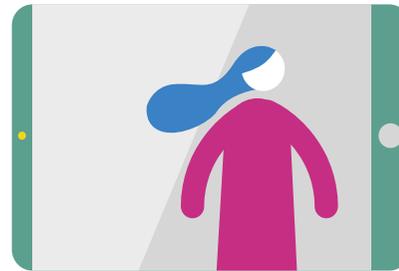
Focusing on: Inclusion and diversity

Good quality youth participation should be accessible and welcoming to young people from all backgrounds, communities and social groups. All forms of youth participation can be socially inclusive. No one type is more or less inclusive than the other.

Not all young people have the same views. Different communities of young people experience the world in very different ways. Being inclusive means recognising different voices and making sure that there are opportunities for everyone to be heard, and for their experiences and needs to be considered.

Sometimes this can mean paying attention to who is involved in a participation project, and making sure that no groups are excluded. Access is only one dimension of inclusion. It is also important that young people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to lead it.

Inclusive participation can also require the creation of dedicated spaces and projects specifically for groups in society that are less visible and who do not often get heard. Doing so can provide safe spaces for them to raise issues that are important to them.

Focusing on: Digital transformations

Nearly all forms of participation can be created in an online format, and participation projects are increasingly starting to work with both online and offline approaches. This can refer to hosting virtual local youth council meetings, organising protests using hashtags and social media, organising digital voting for a group on any given issue, or simply using digital tools for communicating about your issue or about what you are doing in your project to a wider public.

The digital world also opens up new possibilities for things that cannot be done in the real world, such as running projects that connect people around the world to work together on solving problems and discussing common issues.

Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

Environmental issues are one of the key priorities young people wish to take action and have their voice heard on. According to the ⊚ European Youth Forum[2] , **"Throughout Europe, young people are on the streets demanding climate action. In initiatives like** ⊚ Fridays for Future, **Climate Thursdays or** ⊚ Youth Strike 4 Climate, **thousands of students gather each week to protest for immediate and decisive actions to fight the climate crisis, forming a still growing movement for climate action. Young people are also at the forefront of various climate marches taking place all across Europe".**

Youth participation also contributes directly to sustainability. Environmental activists recognise that climate justice and democratic participation are linked. Some groups and individuals have much greater control of the

world's resources than others, and they are using these resources at unsustainable rates. Achieving sustainability means democratising who controls our resources, who has access to them and how they are used is determined. Youth participation gives young people greater influence within our democracies. By having young people participate in the planning of urban or rural redevelopment, the use of energy or food production, it democratises those processes.

[2] European Youth Forum (2019) ⊚ Resolution in support of youth demanding urgent climate action, Brussels

If you want to go deeper...

visit

📶 participationpool.eu

📖 Or read

The 📶 Youth Participation Strategy for enhancing youth participation in democratic life through the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

📶 Youth Participation Good Practices in Different Forms of Regional and Local Democracy by Ana Gretchel and her colleagues.

The Council of Europe Study 📶 New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes by Anne Crowley and Dan Moxon.

What type of project are you dealing with?

Use the tool below to help think about what type of project you are dealing with. You may be interested in developing a project or are already involved in an existing project. Mark each line based on what the project focus is.

VOICE
Young people encouraging decision makers to effect change.

⟵————————|————————⟶

ACTION
Young people making the change themselves.

DIGITAL ONLY
Connecting and working together in digital spaces without meeting in person.

⟵————————|————————⟶

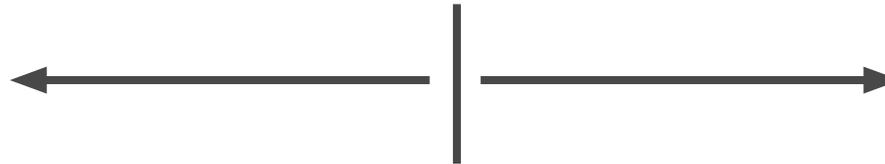## OFFLINE ONLY
Bringing young people to physical spaces to connect and work together.

OPEN TO EVERYONE
Being accessible to all.
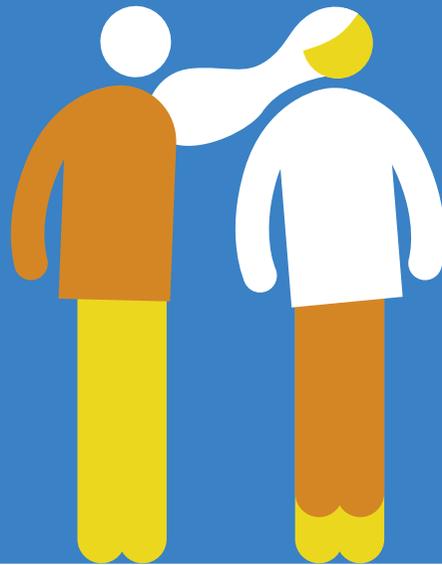
⟵————————|————————⟶

JUST FOR ONE TARGET GROUP
Creating space for a group that doesn't often get heard.

3

Promoting participation for all

Every young person has the right to participate in democratic life. Participation for all is about increasing the number of young people participating in democratic life overall, AND about ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities have an equal opportunity to participate. Outreach and inclusive participation are both key in this.

Outreach is about contacting young people who are not already involved in youth participation activities and informing them about the possibility to become more involved. It can also mean contacting those that can help you to reach young people (e.g. schools, non-governmental organisations, media, employment agencies or others whom you find to have access to those young people). Outreach can be a stage within your project. This is when you try to attract more project participants to join the activities. It can also be the main purpose of your project. For instance, you could run an outreach project that encourages more young people to join an existing youth forum or youth organisation.

Inclusive participation is about ensuring the participation of young people who have fewer opportunities to participate in democratic life as a result of:

- Disability;
- Educational difficulties;
- Cultural differences, e.g. immigrants or refuges or people belonging to a national or ethnic minority;
- Geographic obstacles, such as being in a rural area;
- Social problems, such as facing discrimination because of gender, ethnicity or sexuality,
- Health;
- Economic circumstances;
- any other aspects of their identity or circumstances or a combination thereof [1].

There are many factors that could exclude young people from your project. For example, deliberate exclusion occurs as a result of prejudice or hate speech directed towards young people belonging to particular groups. Exclusion also occurs when the design of a project makes it harder for some young people to take part, even if this was not the intention. For instance, a project that only takes place on Saturdays might exclude young Jewish people who wish to observe the Shabbat as a day of rest. Or, young people with autism could be excluded if they do not receive clear information about the order of activities within a project meeting. Identifying which groups of young people have fewer opportunities in your context is a crucial first step towards working inclusively.

[2] European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture (2014) ⌖ Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, Brussels, provides more details on situations young people can be in that prevent them from participating.

# There are different ways to take an inclusive approach to participation

1. Ensuring young people from all backgrounds have equal access to your project. This means performing outreach work to contact and engage with young people with fewer opportunities or who may not feel very welcome to join your project right now. It also means identifying who already has access to those young people, with whom those young people communicate and whom do they trust. It also involves identifying the barriers that prevent them from being involved and providing additional support to overcome these.

2. Developing a project focused on one particular group of young people with fewer opportunities, to promote their participation in democratic life. For example, setting up a leadership programme or youth event for young LGBTQIA+[2] people. This can help create a safe space for young people from that group to explore issues and topics that are important to them, which might not get discussed in other projects. It helps ensure that this group has equal opportunities to participate in democratic life overall.

Once young people with fewer opportunities have access, promoting participation also means ensuring that all young people involved in an activity have a chance and receive the support they need to take up leadership in the project.

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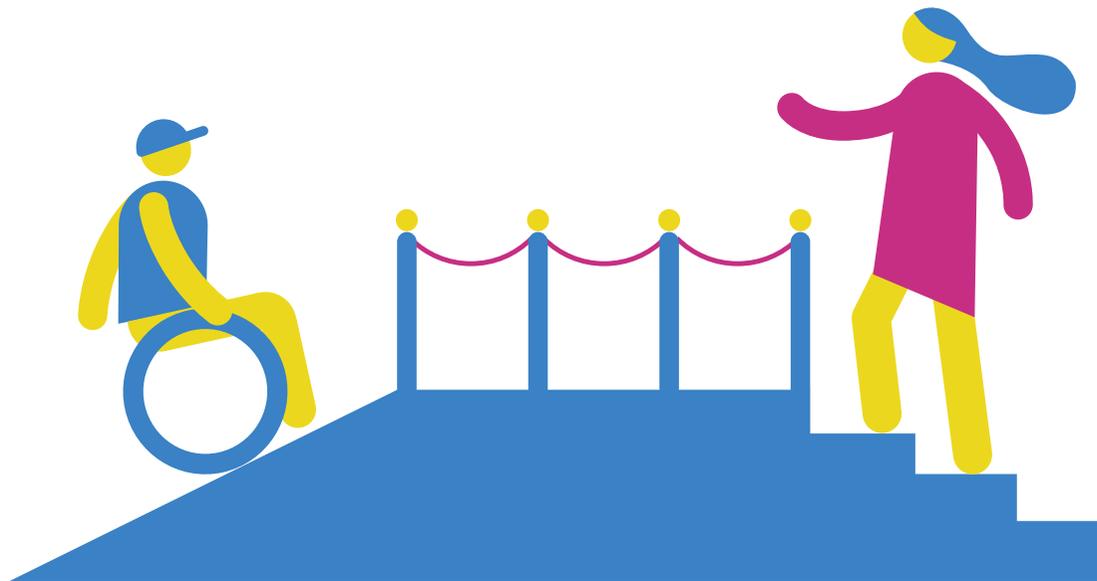
[2] For the meanings of different acronyms, look at the Acronyms Explained page of the Outright International Website: 🌐 https://outrightinternational.org/content/acronyms-explained
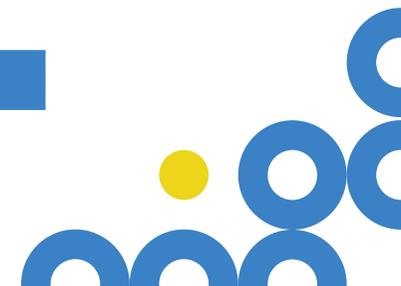
Focusing on: Outreach in practice

Start by identifying which groups of young people are in your community. Try to identify any groups that might not have been involved in your previous projects. Consider how you might get in touch with those groups of young people (i.e. map relevant organisations who could help to reach out to them). Consider what you can do, in cooperation with others too, to encourage them to join your project.
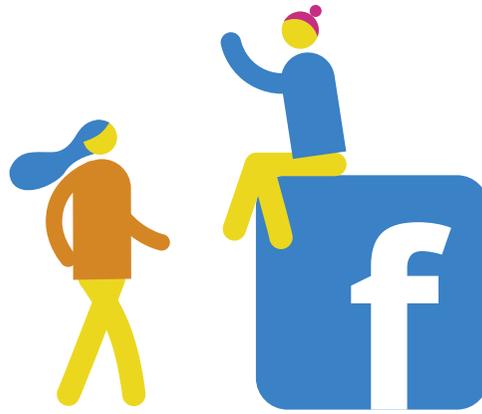
You can use a range of methods for outreach work, such as social media campaigns or youth work that involves visiting public spaces to contact young people. You can also run taster events and activities in schools, with other youth organisations, or in community spaces.

During outreach work, think about the main messages you want to use to promote your project. Try to communicate the benefits of getting involved in order to motivate young people to join.

Before going public with your messages or campaigns, if possible, test them on the target group representatives. Make sure the message also feels attractive, trustworthy and authentic for them.
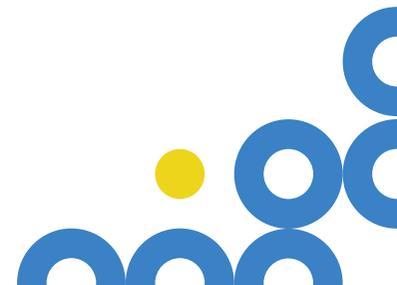
Focusing on: Inclusion and Diversity

When creating a project, start by thinking about which different groups of young people are in your community. Consider how you can reach out and invite them to be involved in the design of your project from the start.

During outreach, spend time talking to different groups of young people to identify the barriers that might prevent them from accessing your project. Try to remove these barriers from the design of your project and while implementing it.

Consider providing additional support during your project for those young people with fewer opportunities. This will help overcome barriers and enable young people to participate fully. Different groups of young people may need different types of support.

Young people are not a homogenous group. Different groups of young people might have different voices and opinions. Reflecting and promoting a diversity of voices in your project outcomes is an important part of inclusive youth participation.

Create opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities to take up leadership positions in your projects. This will help ensure the project design meets their needs.

Focusing on: Digital transformations

Social media and online promotion can be a very effective way to conduct outreach activities and inform young people about the possibility of joining your project.

Digital tools and communication channels have wider reach; however, they are not automatically inclusive. Not all young people have internet access and digital tools may not be accessible to everyone.

If you are using a digital tool to deliver your activities, pay attention to which groups of young people engage with it. Just as you would in a face-to-face activity, try to identify who might be excluded and why. Put in place steps to change this, or provide alternative face-to-face activities to compliment your digital work.
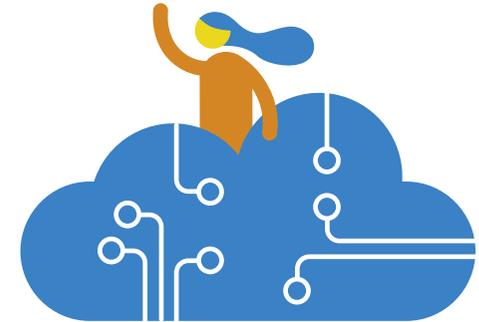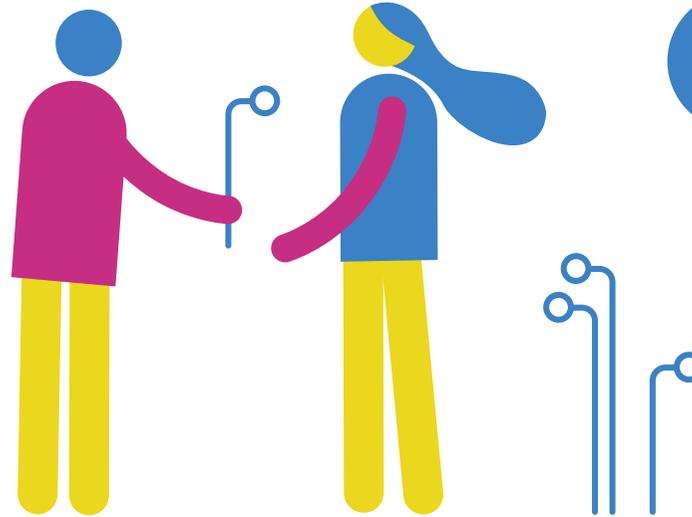
Instead of creating your own communities, go where the young people are.
Do not forget that you are competing for young people's attention in the digital world, so:

1. **invest in design and messages;**
2. **choose your channels wisely;**
3. **consider that not all information that is shared about your important topic is correct (fake news);**
4. **improve your audiences' critical thinking and media and information literacy skills**
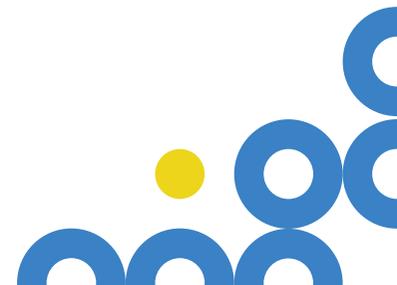
Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

Sustainability, climate change and environmental issues have an inclusion dimension to them.
This can be thought about in two ways:
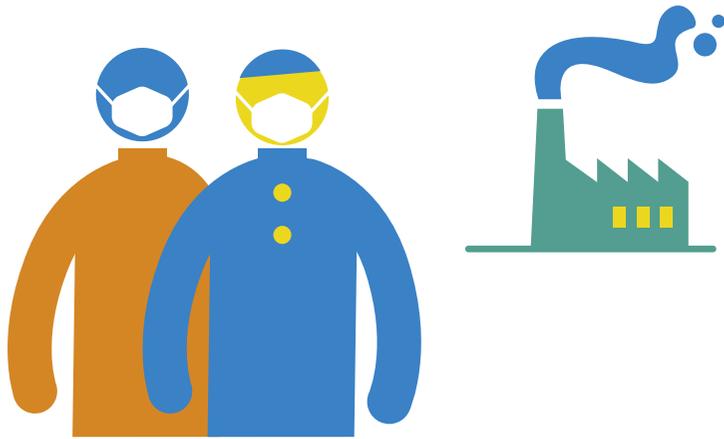
Excluded or marginalised groups of people suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change and the impact of environmental degradation. For example, people with health conditions are more likely to be affected by air pollution, or people in rural areas may be more affected by the extreme weather conditions resulting from climate change.

As new generations of young people grow up, they will have to live with the consequences of the climate change caused by their elders and previous generations. They will suffer from the consequences of the previous generations' overconsumption of the world's resources, and lack of care for the environment.

This means it is vital for young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, to have a say and influence in the climate agenda.

If you want to go deeper...

check out:

🌐 SALTO Inclusion and Diversity's website for more advice on working with young people with fewer opportunities.

The 🌐 promotion and outreach section of SALTO PI's Participation Pool for more advice on outreach and how to communicate your project to young people.

The 🌐 webinar: Reaching young people online sheds light on how young people interact online and looks into pathways to reach them in those online spaces.

Zero Waste Europe 🌐 guide to organizing zero waste events for ideas on how to reduce waste at an event.
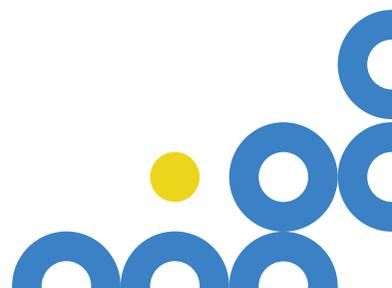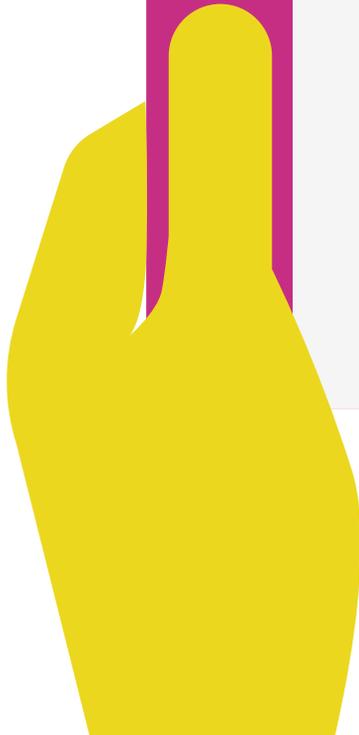
Make an outreach action plan

You can use this tool to help you plan the outreach work for your project. Use it when you are designing your project.

_____

Which groups of young people are in your community?

_____

Which of those groups have fewer opportunities to participate in democratic life?
Are there any specific groups that your project focuses on?

_____

What are the realities, interests, needs and barriers that might prevent those groups of young people accessing your project?

Make an outreach action plan

_____

**What can you change about your project to support their interests
and needs and remove the barriers they are facing?**

_____

**How will you communicate the possibility to join your project
to young people, including those with fewer opportunities?**

_____

**What messages and information will you give out about
your project to motivate new young people to join?**

_____

**What elements does your communication plan include (e.g. social media,
outreach events, other activities presented in a time frame)?**

4
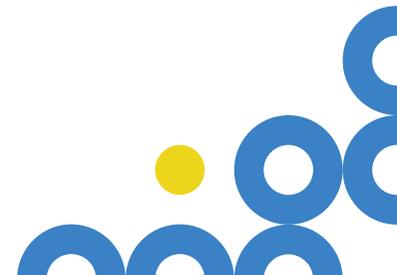
Learning by doing

Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps both encourage projects that are based on informal learning and non-formal educational approaches. Learning competencies (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) that are relevant to youth participation, and actively applying them to create change, is a key part of every project.

In participatory, non-formal education, participants learn from their experiences.
In formal education, the teacher is typically assumed to hold the knowledge, and is expected to share it with the learners. In non-formal learning, participants generate knowledge themselves, learning from their environment, their experiences and their dialogue with each other.

A way of thinking about participants' learning that fits well with youth participation is the **cycle of experiential learning** [1].
In this model of learning, participants learn from their experiences and then actively try to apply their learning in new experiences,
to create changes in their lives and the world around them (see the 🔘 Creating change module). The cycle has four stages.

1. Experiencing.
(doing / having an experience)

2. Reflecting.
(reviewing / reflecting on the experience)

3. Generalising.
(concluding / learning from the experience)

4. Active Experimentation.
(planning / trying out what you have learnt)
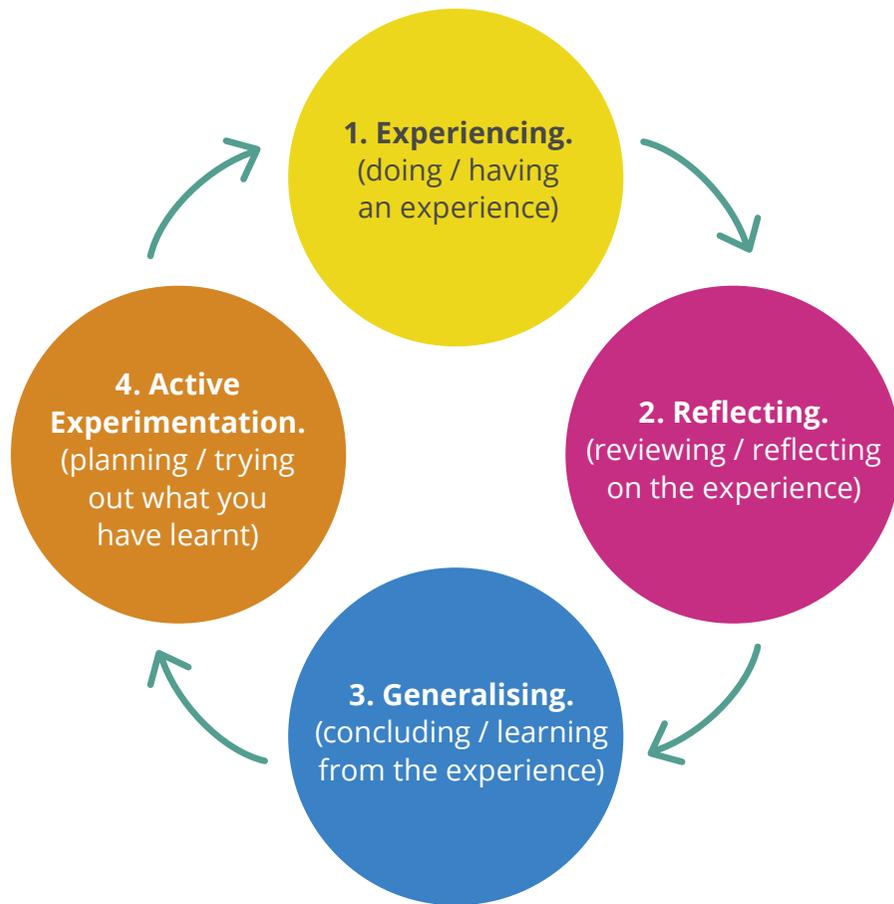
1. Experiencing. Participants will begin a project with many experiences already. Across their lives, they have had the experience of trying to make their voices heard, or trying to take action and create changes in the world around them. These experiences are the starting point from which participants' learning can begin. Any kind of experience, even those that have not been fun or have been negative, can be a source of learning, so everyone has something they can contribute.

2. Reflecting. This involves participants reflecting on and reviewing their experiences. For example, participants might begin by identifying the situations in which they want their voices to be more heard, or themes on which they want to be able to take action.

3. Generalising. Building on their reflections, discuss patterns and common themes. They begin to plan activities they can put in place to try and generate action or have their voices heard more. These plans might form the basis for a project design. For example, if participants identified that they had a limited opportunity to speak to politicians about environmental issues, they might plan an event or an activity that resolves this by bringing young people and politicians together.

4. Applying. Participants put their plans into action and test out their ideas. They experiment with new ways of doing things that they may not have tried before. This stage of learning occurs during the implementation of project activities, which provides participants with the practical opportunity to test out their ideas.

Once these activities have occurred, participants can reflect on whether they achieved the change they wanted, or improved the situation they were trying to address. The activities they put in place create concrete new experiences from which participants can learn. As participants evaluate their activities, a new learning cycle begins. Participants can go on to plan the next stage of activities in a project or even their next project based on their reflection and new learning.

[1] Based on Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning, Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

📖 Focusing on: Facilitating learning

Leading a participatory learning process involves acting as a facilitator rather than as a teacher. Rather than being an expert who shares their knowledge about a topic, a facilitator is someone who supports learners and groups of participants in taking charge and directing their own learning and projects. Working in this way means that power is transferred from the educator to the learners, which supports the goal of making the project participatory.

Facilitating self-directed learning in groups can involve;

Recognising that project participants already have a wide range of competencies, and that they can learn from each other and learn together.

Using techniques that encourage participants to ask broader questions about political and social issues questions, and how their lives are impacted by these.

Accepting that project participants have an understanding of their lives and can identify their own issues and challenges, as well as strategies for increasing their own participation in democratic life.

Supporting participants in working together to identify collective action and strategies they wish to implement.

For example, during a project, a facilitator might guide the participants most closely in the very early planning stages, with the aim of transferring power and decision-making to the participants as soon as possible. As the group takes off the facilitator might then apply a more hands-off approach in order to enable the group to implement their ideas effectively.
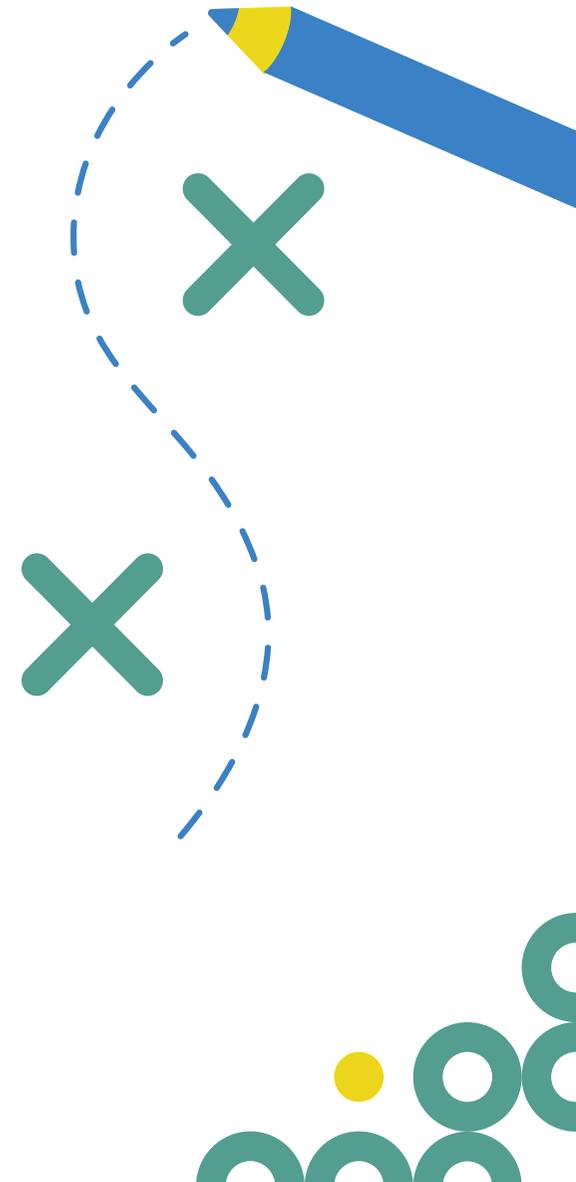
Focusing on: Inclusion and Diversity

One of the key roles of a facilitator is to help challenge any discrimination and inequality related to ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, disability or any other form of social differentiation, if any takes place in a project. There are many ways of doing this, including:
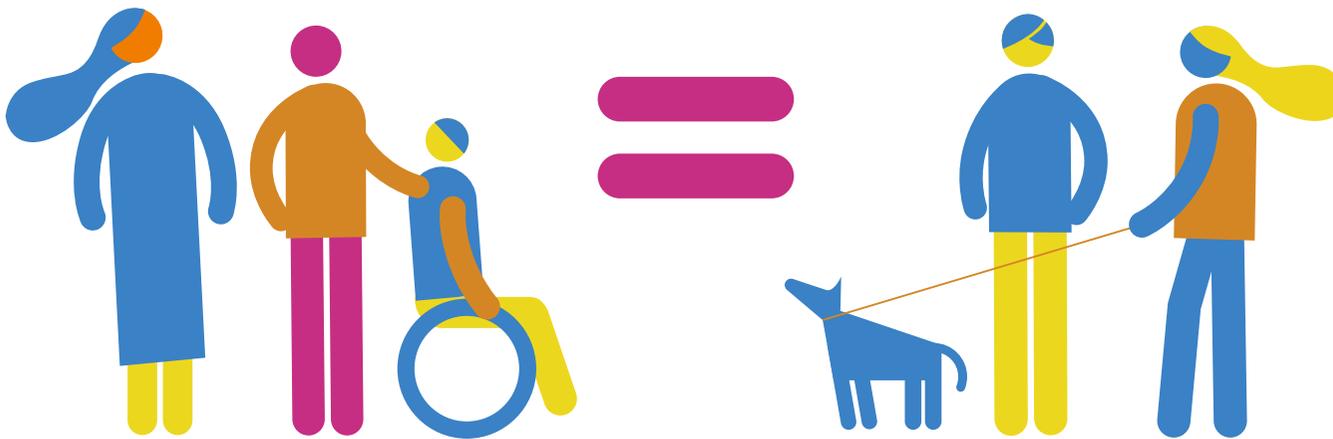
Supporting participants to identify patterns of exclusion and to design their activities inclusively.

Enabling participants to create group agreements on how they want to work together and support each other to ensure that everyone can be included.

Challenging discrimination or hate speech if it occurs and offering support to those it is directed towards.

Providing additional support to participants who may need this to be fully included or to actively participate.

Focusing on: Digital Transformations

In the digital world, it is possible to share your ideas/projects/results with anyone around the world. Likewise, it is possible to interact with people from different perspectives. Online platforms can support your process of learning and you can also use them to share your results in order to inspire others.

If you are a project leader or facilitator who uses digital tools to work with participants, it can be important to set boundaries and manage expectations about the learning support that participants can expect from you. Communicating clearly about how you want to be communicated with, when, using which media and how long participants might need to wait for a response can help manage expectations and avoid misunderstandings.

If you create a digital space to facilitate participants' learning through interaction (e.g. group chat), it will be accessible 24/7, unlike in a face-to-face setting. As a facilitator, it is not possible to moderate this sort of space around the clock. Therefore, it can be important to set clear ground rules and boundaries for how the space should be used. This may include the purpose of the group and some principles for users to ensure that the interaction and discussion is respectful and inclusive.
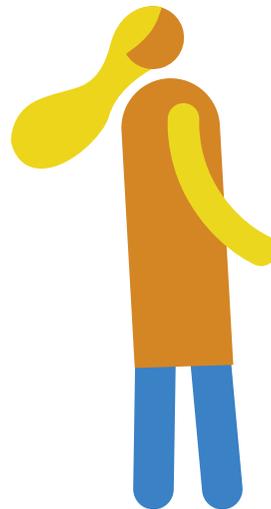
Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

The 17 🌐 UN Sustainable Development Goals can provide a good learning resource to engage in dialogue and reflection around sustainability.

Participatory experiential learning methods are well suited to sustainability education. They engage young people in thinking about what is at stake in climate change, on the basis of which they can design and implement effective actions to combat it. Reflecting on this improves their competence for further action.

Ensuring the world becomes sustainable requires changes in the way of life of those living in Europe and other developed countries. Our current consumption patterns and use of resources is unsustainable. This means there is a strong need to test and implement new ways of living that are not resource intensive.

If you want to go deeper...

visit

🛜 participationpool.eu
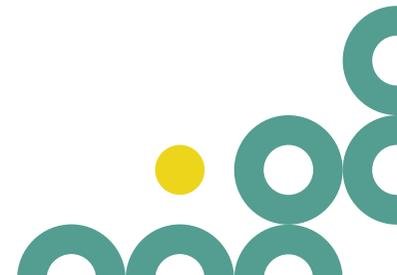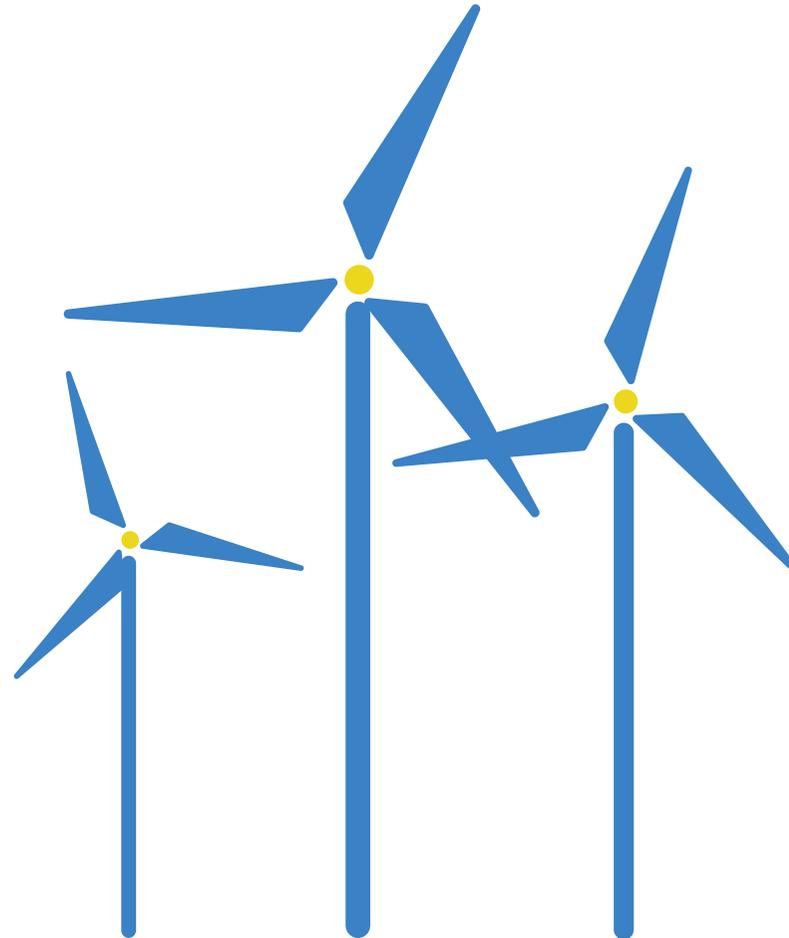
The Council of Europe's 🛜 Competences for Democratic Culture provides a framework for the different competencies needed in a democratic society and for how to educate around those.

The YWelp Project's learning module on 🛜 non-formal learning and youth participation introduces the concept and opportunities of non-formal learning in youth work, the concept and models of youth participation in youth work, and examples of participation experiences.

The EU-Council of Europe Youth partnership's 🛜 Study on the value of informal education, with special attention to its contribution to citizenship education, civic participation and intercultural dialogue and learning, European citizenship, peace-building and conflict transformation by Sladjana Petkovic introduces the concepts of informal learning and informal education and their value and impact, as well as validation and tools for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The 🛜 Participation and Sustainable Europe Website provides a variety of tools to support learning and participation around environmental issues.

Recognition of participant learning

You can offer Youthpass as a tool to participants for reflecting on their learning and for gaining recognition for that learning.

⊚ Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and solidarity activities in the context of projects funded by Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes. It is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning.

While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, project participants describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. This is how Youthpass supports reflection on the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes of individuals.

As a Europe-wide recognition instrument for non-formal learning in the context of youth work supported by the EU, Youthpass strengthens the social recognition of youth work.

Youthpass supports the active European citizenship of young people and of youth workers by describing the added value of their project for the common good.

Youthpass also helps support the employability of young people and youth workers by raising their awareness of and helping them to describe their competences, by documenting their acquisition of those competences and by providing certification.

visit

⊚ **www.youthpass.eu**

to begin using Youthpass in your project.
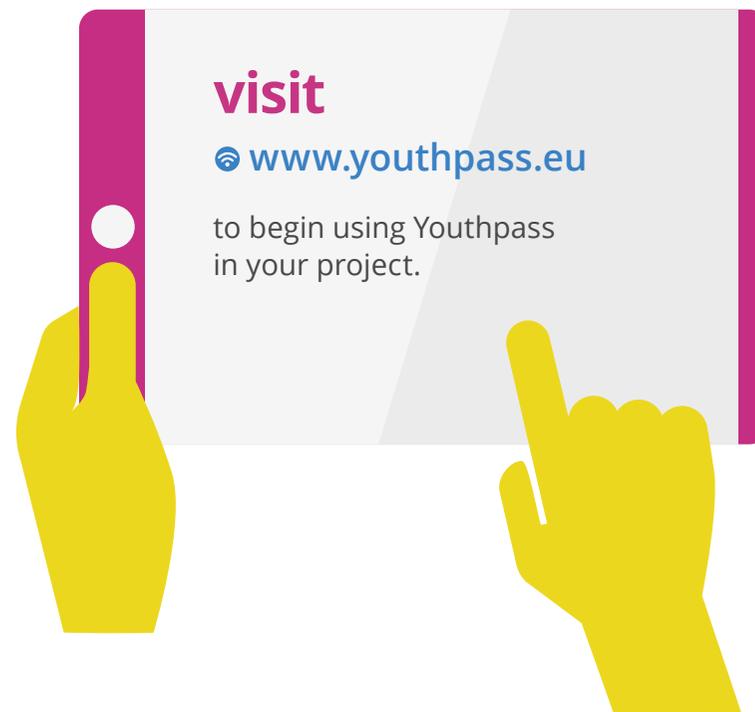
Creating conditions for experiential learning

To create conditions for participation through experiential learning, you could implement some of the following strategies:

Ask participants what youth participation means for them.
Define youth participation together with all participants and/or your youth group and set appropriate expectations – youth participation can come in many forms, depending on your specific context and situation...

Cooperatively create ground rules to encourage youth participation.
With participants, develop a set of working principles everyone is asked to respect to ensure participation. Offer the space to the participants to share their ideas and opinions on what these principles are. Let everyone know that all ideas and opinions are welcome and that every youth group member and every participant is to be respected.

Creating conditions for experiential learning

Encourage youth participation.
Act according to what you are saying, and make sure young people feel encouraged to have a VOICE or to take ACTION throughout the activity or project. When appropriate, step back and let the group lead themselves while you remain available for support if they need it.

Appreciate youth participation.
Thank every young person for their contributions during the project - often and visibly.
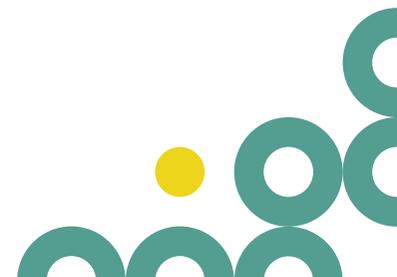
Young people leading projects

Erasmus+ and **European Solidarity Corps** encourages projects that are led by young people throughout all stages of preparation, implementation and follow-up. Young people participating in decisions about how a project is run and being able to shape and create projects for themselves is a key part of youth participation.

Groups of young people can develop projects on their own, but youth workers and young people can also collaborate to develop projects together. Providing support for young people to lead and take decisions about projects can help ensure that young people are able to implement their project ideas successfully.

People supporting young people to create projects, whether they are young leaders or youth workers, should consider how they can share leadership and decision-making with other project participants. Different project participants may choose to be involved in different levels of decision-making at different times, depending on their personal needs and interests. The project leaders should be transparent about the amount of influence other participants can have on the project, and they should communicate openly about how and why decisions about the project are made.

A helpful way of thinking about a project participant's level of involvement in project decision-making is to use Treseder's Degrees of participation model [1]. It describes the different relationships that project leaders can have with participants and how decision-making can be shared.

Project participants initiate the project and share decisions with youth workers / young leaders. Project participants have the initial ideas, shape the project design and come to youth workers / young leaders for advice discussion and support before decisions are made. The youth workers / youth leaders offer their expertise for project participants and decisions are taken jointly.

Youth workers/ young leaders consult with participants. The project is initiated planned and designed by youth workers / young leaders, but project participants are consulted on the need for the project, the design and how it is run. Project participants have full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously. Youth workers / young leaders are responsible for decision-making.

Youth workers/ young leaders initiate the project and share decision with project participants.
Youth workers/ young leaders have the initial idea, but project participants are also involved in planning and design. Not only are project participants views considered but they are also involved in taking decisions about how the project is run.

Project participants are assigned roles and informed about the project design by youth workers/ young leaders.
Youth workers/ leaders initiated, plan and design the project. Young people volunteer to be participants. Project participants understand the project, they know who decided to involve them and why.

Degrees of participation

Project participants initiate and lead the project.
Project participants have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Youth workers or others who are supported, such as trainers, are available for support, but do not take charge or become involved in decision-making, or leading the project. All of the project participant are involved in leading the project.
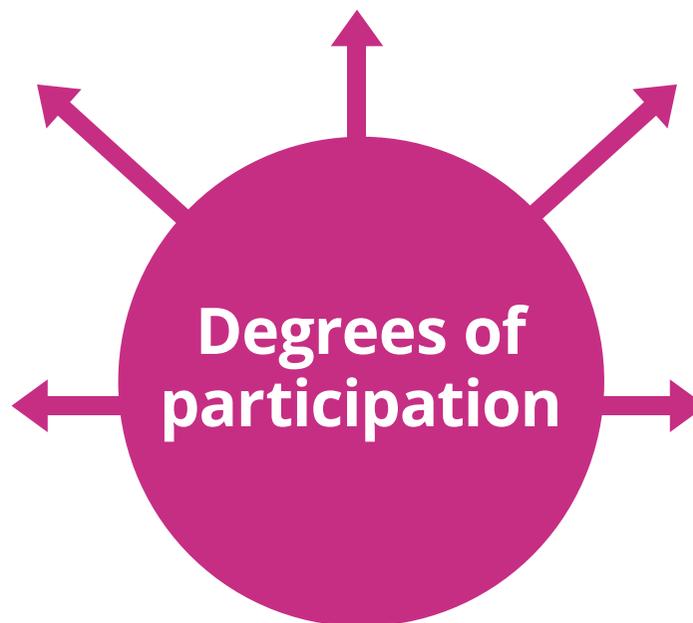
Different degrees of participation might be useful in different contexts. For example;

Project participants initiate and lead the project. This is useful if the participants already have the confidence and skills to lead a project. It allows all participants to take full control of the project.

Project participants are assigned roles and informed about the project design by youth workers/young leaders. This can be useful when project leaders have a clear vision of what they want to achieve, such as mobilising other young people to join a political campaign. However, it does not allow participants to shape the project, so it is only youth led if the youth workers/young leaders are young people themselves.

The other degrees of participation describe the **different ways decision-making is shared between project leaders and project participants.** In some projects, particularly very large ones, it may not be practical for every young participant to be involved in decision-making. The degree of participation can vary throughout the project. For example, a project might have a steering group of young people that shares in making decisions about the project, whilst other participants chose to take part in activities without being heavily involved in decision-making. This is perfectly valid, as long as this is fully transparent and everyone understands that this is what is happening.
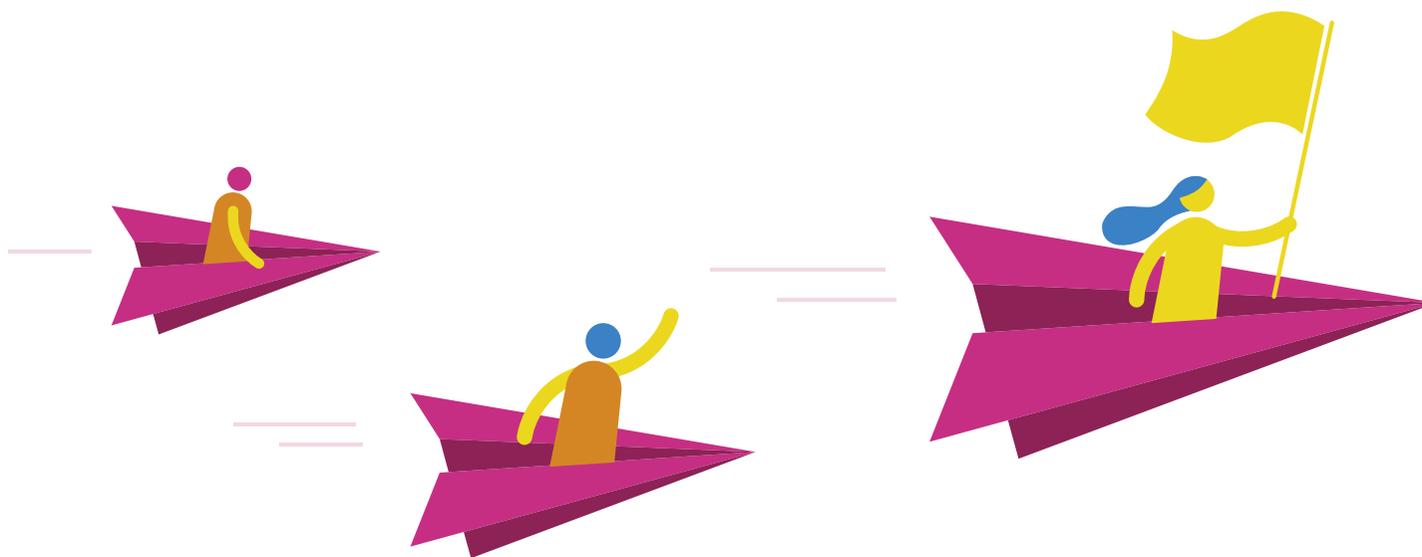
Focusing on: Values and principles for decision-making in projects

Decision-making in projects should be:

Transparent - Make sure all project participants understand how decisions in the project are made and who is involved in decision-making. When involving project participants in decision-making, be clear about the level of influence they can have.

....

Informed - Make sure project participants are informed about when decisions are going to be taken, and how they can contribute to them. Ensure those involved in decision-making have enough information to make decisions effectively.

....

Accountable - Make sure the outcome of the decisions about the project, as well as how and why they were taken, is shared with all project participants. The people involved in decision-making should be available for further discussion with the project participants.

....

Supported - Make sure any young people involved in decision-making have the support they need to be fully involved. Designing projects can be complex, and participants may need access to clear information, guidance or training in order to be thoroughly involved and able to participate fully.
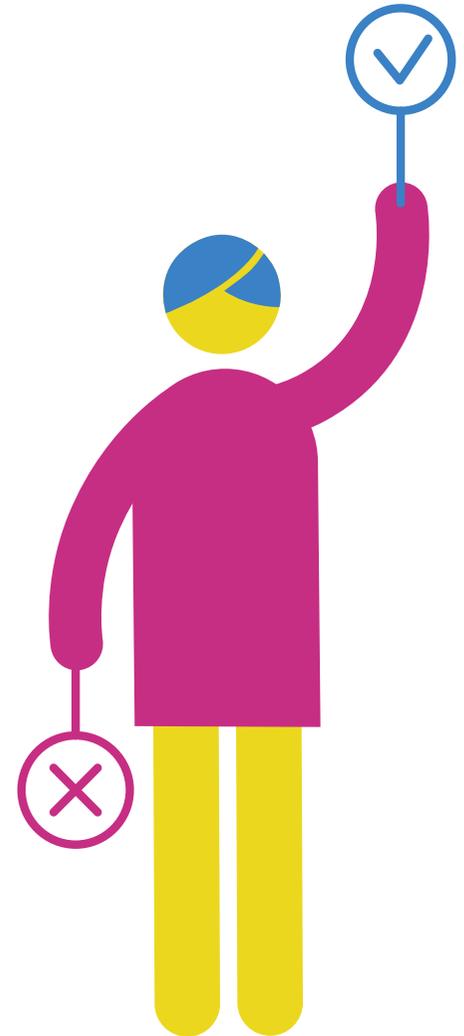
Focusing on: Inclusion and Diversity

Module ⊚ Promoting participation for all focuses on ensuring projects are accessible to participants from a diverse range of backgrounds. When thinking about which groups of young people are able to access your project, make sure that you also consider which groups are involved in leading and running the project. Inclusive participation means ensuring that young people with fewer opportunities are able to take up positions of leadership in your project, as well as taking part in the activities it offers.

Focusing on: Digital Transformations

Digital tools are very useful in finding project partners and potential participants for your project. Digital tools also provide a way to connect all the project participants and hold discussions as a basis for decision-making. Creating an internal blog, chat groups or something similar solely for your participants is a great way to enable ongoing communication between the project leaders and participants. Such tools are also useful for facilitating consensus building and decision-making when face-to-face meetings are not an option.

These channels can be used to check a participant's views and ask for opinions before making decisions as well as to give feedback on the outcome of decisions.

If these channels are being used for decision-making, it is important to be clear how decisions are taken within them. Group chats can sometimes give the impression that the last message posted is the decision that has been made. Using polling and voting tools within group chats, as well as having a moderator, is a way of overcoming this.

Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

Young people's interest in environmental issues, climate change and the sustainability of the contemporary way of living may spark their interest in leading a project addressing these issues. Encourage them to explore the issue further and its impact on young people. Help them to determine what exactly the issue is and how it affects them, so that they can start designing the ways in which they would want to address it.

You could also help them to take inspiration from different environmental projects and green initiatives and also those that were initiated and implemented by young people across the world. Check 🌐 Flagship Projects, or 🌐 Climate Change Association for inspiration and ideas.

If you want to go deeper...

visit

🌀 participationpool.eu

📖 Or check out:

Read more about levels of involvement in decision-making and Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation in UNICEF's Publication 🌀 Child Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship.

Use 🌀 Have your Say Manual based on 🌀 Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life for ideas for activities.

Who leads?

You can use this activity to think about the decisions you have to make for your project and who will be involved in them.

1. Make a list of all the major decisions you have to take about your project.
You can use a tool such as a mind map or bubble diagram to help you do this.
Examples of decisions could include the theme of the project, the location of the project and which activities will take place.

2. For each decision, or group of decisions, identify which people in your project will be responsible for making this decision.
Then identify which other participants they should involve when making that decision.

Who leads?

3. Ask yourself to which degree each group will be involved in the decision-making.
Will you consult with them? Or will they share in the decision-making? Are they aware of their level of influence?
If not, what needs to happen to make that fully transparent?

4. Identify some simple practical steps the people taking decisions about the project can take to:
Contact other participants and find out their views on major decisions, or involve them directly in decision-making.
Give feedback about decisions to other project participants.

Creating change with projects

Within Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, change starts by developing the competencies of the project participants' and supporting their learning.

However, youth participation goes further than this. It is about supporting young people to apply these competencies, to have an influence on the world around them and enable them to create change.

This can include a wide range of activities from lobbying decision makers to change policies to doing voluntary work to improve conditions for the local community.
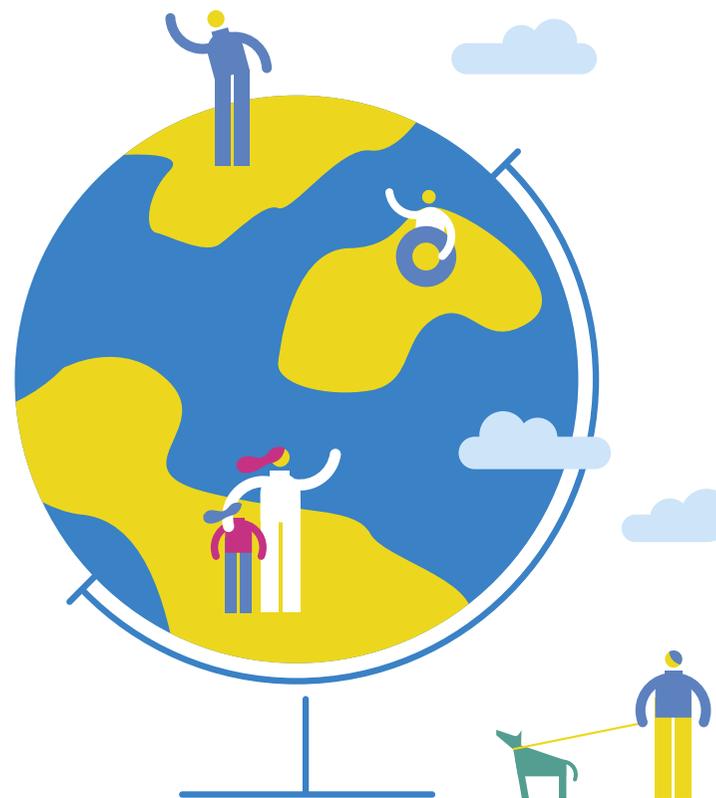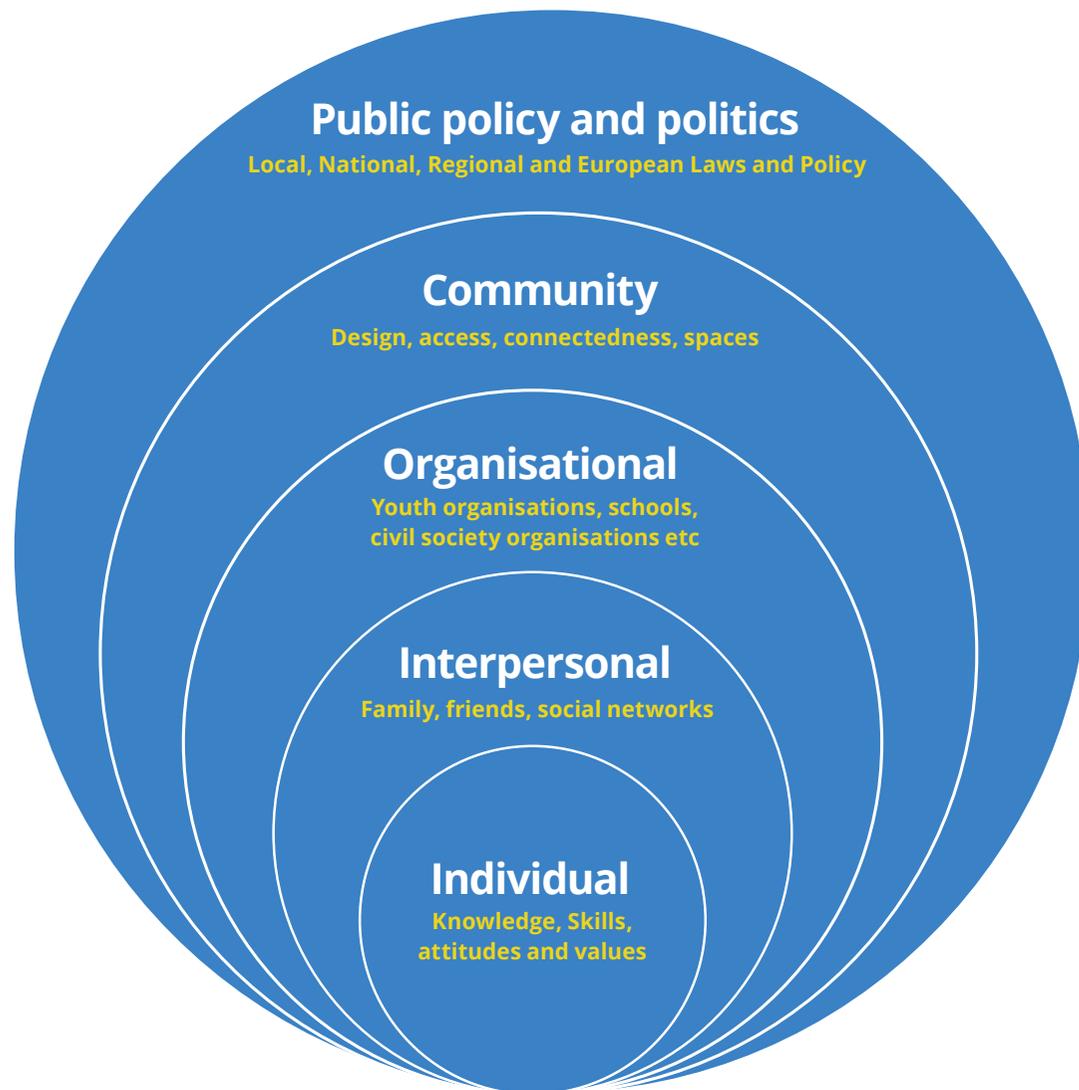
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Public policy and politics
Local, National, Regional and European Laws and Policy

Community
Design, access, connectedness, spaces

Organisational
Youth organisations, schools, civil society organisations etc

Interpersonal
Family, friends, social networks

Individual
Knowledge, Skills, attitudes and values

Change can happen at a variety of levels that are interconnected [1]. At the **individual level,** project participants can develop a wide range of knowledge skills, values and attitudes. This can range from learning how to run a project to learning how democracy works.

At the **interpersonal level,** project participants can work together on changing their attitudes and behaviours among their peers or other people immediately around them in their day-to-day networks. For example, participants could persuade their friendship group to take part in a campaign or join a project addressing climate change and environmental issues.

Participation projects can create change at the **organizational level**, level; For example, by creating an elected youth steering group or advisory board, an organisation such as a museum or healthcare service can share decision-making with young people.

Project participants can create changes in their **wider community**, by organising or setting up initiatives and activities. This involves working at a larger scale and effecting change across whole neighbourhoods, cities or even countries. For example, a group of participants in a European Solidarity Corps project could arrange community events to bring young people and older people closer together in their town, or a youth NGO could run a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of environmental issues with the public.

Public policy and politics can be changed when project participants engage directly with democratic institutions, such as through advocacy and campaigning, by voting or by meeting with politicians to raise concerns. Project participants could also ask for more sustainable mechanisms to be put in place for youth participation, such as co-decision-making with young people for creating change or reforming systems they are concerned with.

[1] Based on Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) *The ecology of developmental processes*, in W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development*, 993–1028, New York, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Focusing on: Creating Change

Be clear on your method of creating change.

Is it a VOICE project where young people advocate towards decision makers for change or an ACTION project where young people implement the change themselves (see the 🌐 What is youth participation? module) or does it somehow combine both?

Be focused.

Identify clearly what sort of change you are trying to create and what a successful change would look like.

Identify supporters and allies.

These are people and organisations that can help you create the change you are hoping to see. Build alliances with these stakeholders and work together.

Identify barriers to change.

Spend time thinking about the things that can stop you from achieving the change and how these can be removed.

Be prepared to re-evaluate.

As your project develops, new goals might emerge and some changes might be harder to achieve than you initially expected. Evaluating your progress regularly will help you adapt to unexpected developments yet stay focused on your ultimate aim.

Be honest with participants.

You might not achieve your goals and there is no guarantee that your project will bring about the change in society that you are seeking. Be open about this at the start of your project, and make sure the project still creates a positive change on participants. Make sure that the project participants have the chance to reflect on what their participation has brought them or their communities beyond the stated goals.

Look at what has been done before.

Learn from projects that have happened in the past. This will help you identify which topics or issues will be most likely to receive support and which methods and strategies are good for making change.

Focusing on: Inclusion and Diversity

Consider which groups of young people are involved in your project and leading efforts at change. Do these also include young people who are directly affected by what you are trying to change, for example Racism or Ableism?

Supporting young people from all backgrounds to take on leadership roles within a project, and especially those directly affected by the issues of the project, can ensure its participation credentials and legitimacy. Everyone in the project should have the opportunity to contribute to making change through the project.
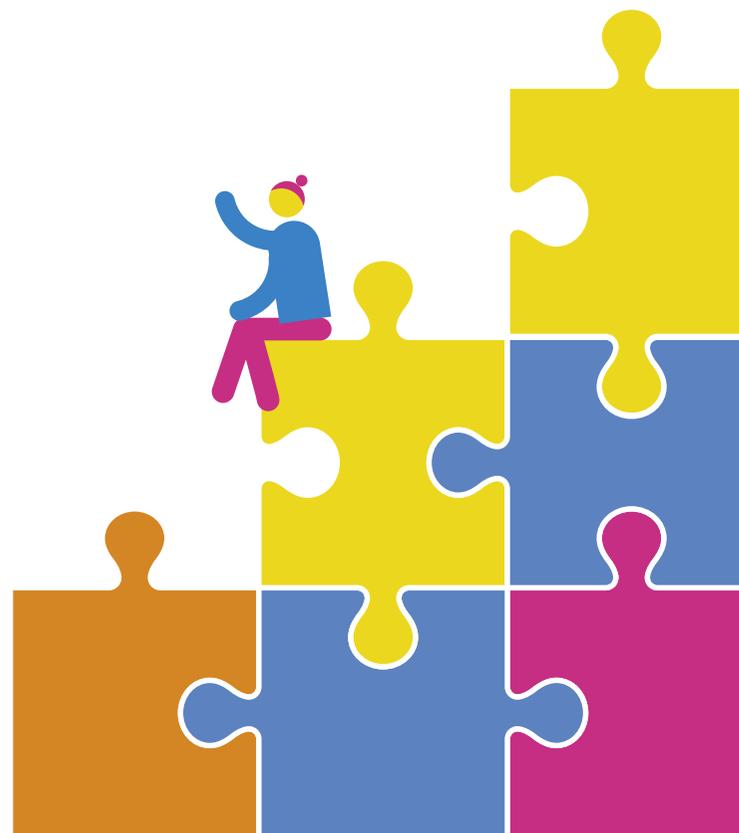
Focusing on: Digital Transformations

Working for change in the digital space does not automatically lead to change offline. A website or social media group that encourages young people to discuss politics might not actually lead them to be more politically active in the 'real' politics where they live or in their community. It will probably not create change in public policies either. For that it would need to be connected to political institutions and processes of decision and policy making. However, the online environment does provide the opportunity to have an impact on the ongoing discussions.

The digital and online environment provides an opportunity for sharing and finding open source data, tools and methods that can help achieve greater change and in different contexts. For instance, hackathons are bringing new problem solving methods in an agile manner, coupled with prototyping and user-focused approaches. Here is only 🔊 one example from Estonia.

On some occasions, creating change in a digital space or community might be the main goal of an activity. For example, the project 🔊 Game Over Hate supports young people in challenging hate speech and prejudice in online settings, to create safer online gaming communities, and it is changing the online gaming culture to reduce discrimination and hate speech in online settings.
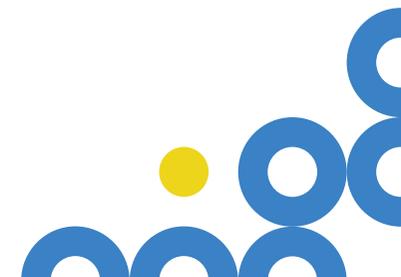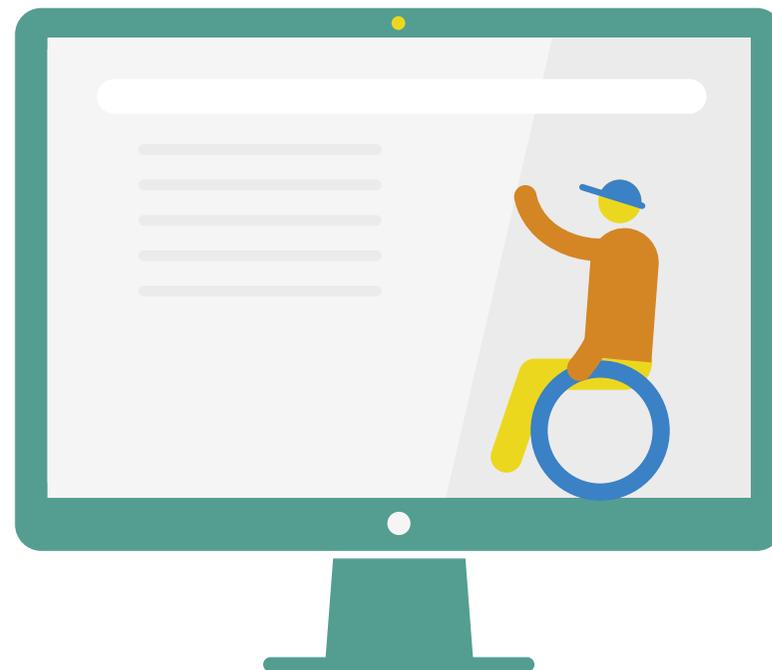
Focusing on: Sustainability, environmental and climate goals

Environmental change can happen as a result of actions at all levels, as the environment transcends them. For example, it can occur:

- ☑ As a result of individual actions, such as recycling waste, conserving clean water or reducing meat consumption.

- ☑ As a result of organisations and communities changing their energy and fuel usage, improving access to sustainable food sources or improving public transport systems.

- ☑ As a result of politics and policies. A good example of such a policy is the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, EU Climate Commitments and EU Green Deal.

💡 **It is a good idea to incorporate into the design of your project the process of bringing participants out of their usual surroundings and behaviour patterns with the aim of inspiring behaviour change (e.g. when in the project the conscious decision is taken not to eat meat or something similar for sustainability reasons). Make sure to support the project participants in actively reflecting on the individual change they are undergoing.**

If you want to go deeper...

visit
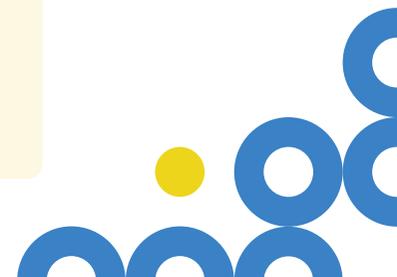
📶 **participationpool.eu**

📚 **Or check out:**

Read Save the Children's Guide to
📶 Monitoring and Evaluating Child Participation
by Gerison Lansdown and Clare O'Kane.

Read the 📶 Handbook of advocacy
made by a group of National Youth Councils.

Read 📶 Finding Spaces for Change
by John Gaventa.

Read the 📶 Learning by doing to think more
about young people's learning and individual
change that happens as a result of projects.

What type of change will your project make?

You can use this tool to help you plan the changes you are trying to create in a participation project.

Imagine you are at the end of your participation project, and everything has gone successfully. What sort of changes will you see? You can record them in the boxes below.

	What or who will have changed?	How will they have changed? What difference will you see?
Individual level		
Interpersonal		
Organisational		
Community		
Public policy and politics		

7

Mobility projects for young people
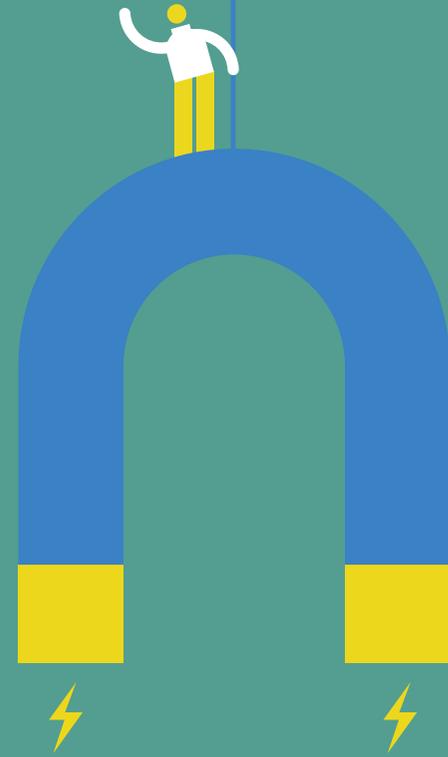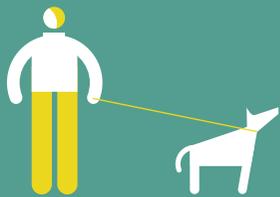
Youth participation is a process in which power is shared with young people, whether in the context of decision-making or other processes involved in the project. The youth participation process interlinks with the youth exchange life-cycle from the moment the idea for the exchange is born through every step in the planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up of the project.

The tools in this module are focusing on:

How to involve
project participants in implementing youth exchanges

How to ensure
the youth exchange is really designed to be inclusive and accessible to young people with fewer opportunities

How to support
project participants so that they 'learn participation' during youth exchange

How to make sure
that youth exchanges are contributing to greater youth participation

If you are not sure where to start, there are other youth workers around you that might have experience in doing this kind of activity and who can offer you advice or answer your questions. They can be in your organisation, in some other organisations near you, in the National Agency for Erasmus+ Programme, online or perhaps already sharing their experience. Look them up and reach out to them with your questions and ask for support!

How to involve young people in implementing youth exchanges?

Before you start » The participatory approach places the focus on the **process**. This changes the **power relations** between the project staff and the participating young people. It also **increases the sustainability** of the project action beyond the end of the project, because the young people continue to take responsibility and have developed their social, civic and political efficacy. Choosing a participatory approach is, therefore, a political act.

The participatory approach requires resources and time, along with additional flexibility and adaptability, as the process evolves and the project unfolds, often with unexpected results.

All of this needs to be clear in the project outline, so that NA staff can understand and support your youth exchange project in the best way.

An idea is born...

A good place to start is... at the very beginning.

When you have an idea for developing a youth exchange project, your starting point could be to share your idea with the young people you are working with, your peer group or any concerned group of young people, using participatory methods. Use any channel at your disposal to share this interest with young people:

- **face-to-face meetings** – check for meetings and activities organised in your proximity and attended by young people that you could use to share your idea;

- **social networks and online communication tools** – check if there are social media channels targeted towards young people specifically (your organisation, or organisations around you might have one) and see if they could be used for sharing your idea;

- **info-boards** – check for info boards in places visited by young people (youth club and other youth spaces, schools and educational centres, info centres, cultural spaces, etc.) and see how you can share your idea there;

When starting these conversations with young people, check their interest in participating. Encourage them to express their motivation, as well as the needs, potential obstacles and fears that they might face. You should be aware of those and be ready to address them and support young people in participating.

💡 **Be creative about the ways of presenting your idea. You can think of creating a storyboard, poster, video, etc.**
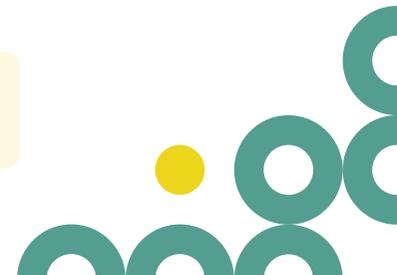
The project is taking shape...

Now you want to make sure that each young person participating is aware of the opportunities and choosing the level of engagement that is the most appropriate for them. To maximise young people's participation, you must have a good handle on your goals and overall project dynamic.

Evaluating Young People's Participation Needs

Support young people in understanding the opportunities for participation that are available in the context of the youth exchange. You could ask some of following questions:

_____

Why have they joined the youth exchange?

_____

How much would they like to/could they invest in this youth exchange (time, skills, etc.)?
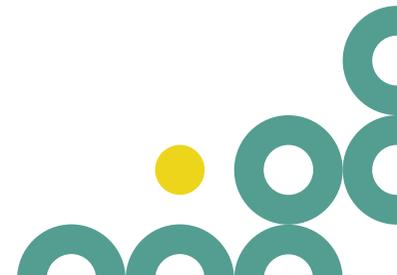
Evaluating Young People's Participation Needs

Share with them the ⊕ Degrees of Participation. Ask them about where they feel confident to engage.
Also ask them what they would like to experience, test or improve when it comes to different participation opportunities?

> 💡 **Asking for too much youth participation can also have a negative effect, as those young people might have other priorities and activities that the project is competing with. Assuming a lack of interest or underestimating young people and their capacities is problematic, just as overestimating their resources and demanding participation all the time can jeopardise the quality of their participation experience.**

Depending on what you have agreed with the project participants about their participation, you could apply some of the following tools for:
• *Informing and consulting project participants*
• *Sharing decision-making between project leaders and project participants*

Informing and consulting project participants

To involve the project participants, it is important to have an **information and/or consultation channel.**

Agree with the participating young people on the channel that is most appropriate and then use this channel to inform and/or consult with them on any relevant milestones and issues.

Not sure what to consult project participants on?
Here are possible suggestions. Note, however, that what to consult on really depends on the concrete youth exchange project, as well as the interest and competencies of the project participants.

Preparation phase - You could involve participants in order to share their views regarding:

Venue – consider different options that look at accessibility, environmental footprint, digital aspects.
Timetable – consider the different learning styles and learning needs of each individual.
Profile of experts to be involved – consider options for more practical or theoretical inputs, a provocative or motivational style, being more critical or assertive, and covering different perspectives in connection to the given topic.
Specific programme elements – consider innovation and out-of-box thinking while bearing in mind the different learning styles and learning needs.

Informing and consulting project participants

Implementation phase - You could use **daily reflection and evaluation meetings** to consult the project participants about the decisions you need to make regarding the next days' programme and/or technical arrangements. Furthermore, you could get their opinions on shaping the follow-up phase.

Follow-up phase – You could involve the project participants in sharing their opinions regarding the different elements to be implemented at this stage, similar to the *preparing phase.*

Online tools and platforms for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group has no opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run up or during the activity. In this case, you could use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions.

> Make sure to inform the project participants beforehand on the issue in question and the platform you are using, so that they can confidently participate in consultations. Take into consideration that there might be GDPR or internet security considerations to take into account when working with young people under the age of majority. Explore participation resource pool to find more info about 🌐 internet safety.
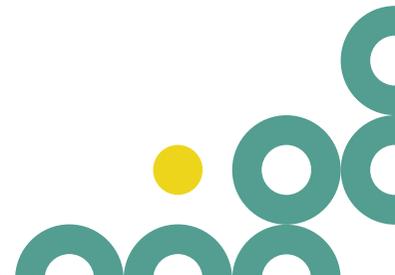
Sharing decision-making between project leaders and project participants

To share decision-making with young people, it is important to (jointly) create a **decision-making model** that everyone feels is appropriate to both the project and the participating young people. The following models (and tools) can be presented to participating young people as a basis for discussion and deciding on which would work best for your youth exchange project.
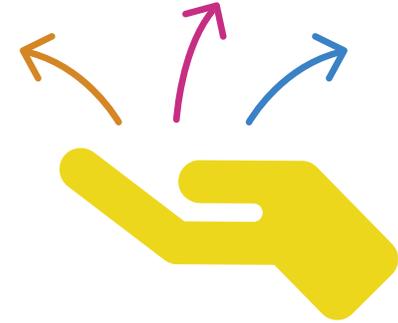
Participatory model – all project participants are engaged in decision-making on the given issues through dialogue, consensus-building exercises or voting systems, whether face-to-face or online.
Online tools and platforms for online voting are Polys, Choice voting, ElectionBuddy, HeliosVoting, Poll-maker, Electionrunner, Opavote (list created by European Youth Forum).

Sharing decision-making between project leaders and project participants

Representative model – some project participants, who are willing or wish to take up additional responsibility in the project, are elected by others to participate in the decision-making on their behalf, i.e. represent them.

Appointive model – Project staff offers interested young people with a "seat at the table" by appointing one or more to participate in decision-making. In this case, those appointed may still consult with the group they are "representing". However, the chances they would feel the urge to do so, and that the group would feel represented, are lower than in other models.

For shared decision-making, a **Project steering committee** can be formed in the early stages of project planning.

Regardless of the model through which the project participants are involved in decision-making, you would need to ensure that you inform them beforehand on the issue in question, so that they can confidently participate in the decision-making process. Informing them may include organising a specific face-to-face meeting and/or preparing material for them to read/watch/listen to.

Is our project really designed to be inclusive and accessible to young people with fewer opportunities?

Before you start » The inclusion of all young people in participatory processes is about supporting young people from all backgrounds and who have different life experiences in accessing participation opportunities equally, and once involved to have their voice heard and specific experiences shared, as well as to take action and take on leadership roles within a project.

Mapping who is left-out

You can start by considering which groups of young people are most likely to be left out when you plan, prepare, implement and follow-up your youth exchange.

Which young people are usually not involved in youth exchanges?

Mapping who is left-out

_____

Which young people are not usually included in youth exchanges on this topic?

_____

Which young people may have some interest in engaging with the topic of youth

_____

Which young people would really benefit from youth exchange experience, regardless of the topic?

_____

In the community in which I do my youth work – with which groups of young people have I the least contact with?
Which groups' realities, traits and backgrounds do I understand and know the least?

If you then ask yourself 'How come?' after any of those questions,
you are already on the way to finding ways to involve excluded young people.
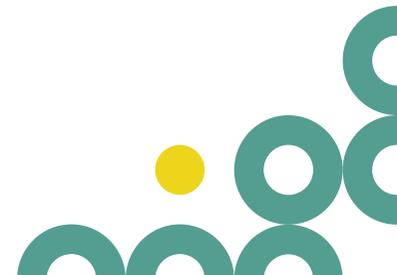
Identifying participation needs and interests

Reach out to the young people you have identified as at risk of being left-out and plan together their engagement with the youth exchange project. Reaching out is about making initial contact. Sometimes, it can be easier to get into contact with them in their comfort environment (their neighbourhood and places they visit and are comfortable with e.g. park, youth club/space).

You should attempt to find out:

Would they be interested in joining your youth exchange? *(As needed, start by explaining to them what youth exchange is)*

What are their participation needs?
What might be an obstacle for their involvement?

Identifying participation needs and interests

_____

How could you support them in their participation?

_____

How much would they like to/could they invest themselves in this youth exchange if the support were provided?

_____

Share with them the 🌐 Degrees of Participation. Ask them about where they feel confident to engage.
Also ask them what they would like to experience, test or improve when it comes to different participation opportunities?

How can we support young people so that they may 'learn participation' during our youth exchange?

Before you start » Participation is best learned through *experience* and *reflection*. Thus, even though you may want to share with young people some theory on participation and ⊙ Degrees of engagement, the most important thing to remember when designing your youth exchange is that it must create conditions for young people's experiential learning and reflection about their own participation.
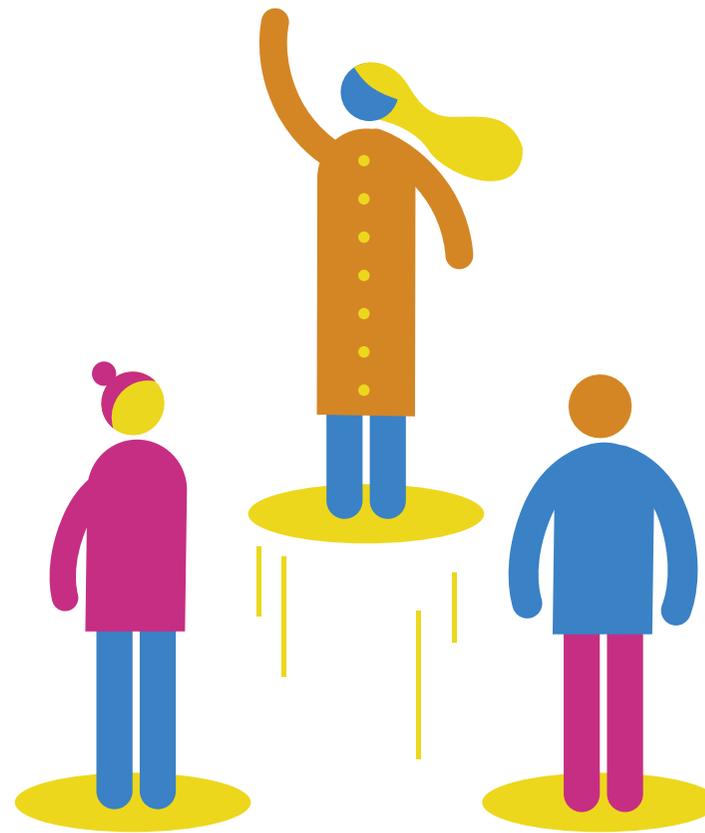
Youth exchange programme review

You can review the programme of the youth exchange to check if there is space in the design for session(s) that would add an experiential learning dimension. For example, you could consider adding a simulation whose main focus is to provide project participants with the experience of participation. This session can, of course, be adapted to the theme of your youth exchange. There are a lot of good reference manuals for participation specific activities that can be adapted to the topics of youth exchanges. One such manual is ⊚ Compass - Manual on Human Rights.

Here are some examples of activities for experiencing participation:

⊚ Electioneering: Participating young people take positions on a statement (e.g. agree, disagree) and build arguments to explain their position. They also reflect on the arguments of others. In this example, the statements are mainly about voting rights. You can adapt the statements to be more relevant for the topic you are dealing with.

⊚ To vote or not to vote?: Participating young people go into the community to find out what community members think on any given subject. In this example, the topic is voting. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for your youth exchange.
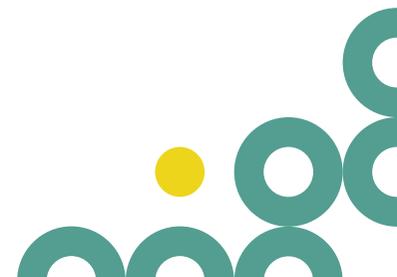
Youth exchange programme review

Let every voice be heard: Participating young people engage in discussion about what might need to be improved about a given topic. Then the participants design a democratic system through which young people can have a say in bringing about the desired improvements. In this example, the topic is education and young people having a say about the kind of education they are receiving. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for your youth exchange.

On the ladder: Participating young people reflect on the meaning of youth participation and discuss ways of increasing their own participation in the local community.

A mosque in Sleepyville: Young people take on roles in a simulation of a town council meeting. In this example, the topic is freedom of religion and discrimination. You can adapt the topic and respective actors to be more relevant for your youth exchange.

Reflection on learning
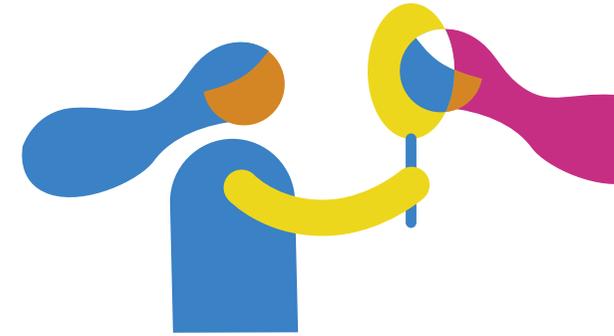
In order to support young people participating in your youth exchange in reflecting on their participation and learning, you yourself should be excited about it! Then you could implement some of the following strategies:

✏️ _____

Allow for enough **reflection time slots** in the programme design.

✏️ _____

Propose that the participating young people create a **learning diary.** It can take different forms – written in a notebook, scrapbook from activities with side notes and drawings, written in notes on a telephone, recorded as audio or video on the phone, physical or online in any format they like.

✏️ _____

Propose that the participating young people choose and 'work with' a **learning buddy**. This can be someone involved in the youth exchange with whom they have already connected and/or feel they can discuss their learning. It could also be someone from their community or youth work context at home that is not involved in the youth exchange. Again the formats can be diverse – walking and talking, sharing and discussing segments from the learning diary, calling or messaging with another person about experiences.

> 💡 **Reflecting on one's own learning is a demanding task, and it can be even more so if the participants have never done anything like that before. Participants might show resistance or appear to struggle with the task. That is nothing out of the ordinary. It might make sense to offer the option of ongoing 'reflection on learning', something that participants can choose to do rather than an obligatory activity, but which the youth exchange provides an infrastructure and support for. Keep in mind that participants will need support and time, and ensure that you offer it to them. You can also consult the 🌐 Learning by doing module for more ideas!**

How can we make sure our youth exchange is contributing to greater youth participation?

Before you start » Regardless of the topic, a youth exchange can strive to either give young people a VOICE, such as organising a petition to the local council to ask for a youth space. Or it can strive to support them to take an ACTION, such as organising a local fundraiser and the clean-up of an abandoned or empty space so that they can transform it into a youth space. In either case, it is important to explore the topic in depth and figure out which approach is best for your activity – VOICE or ACTION, or even a combination of the two. To learn more about VOICE and ACTION and about different forms of youth participation, go to the 🌀 What is youth participation? module.

Supporting young people in initiating and implementing a youth exchange

Some young people might be looking to take greater ownership in the youth exchange project, or even to initiate and implement a youth exchange on their own, and you can offer them support and encouragement. In such cases, you will need to create opportunities for those young people to lead the project through its different stages of planning, preparing, implementation and follow-up. Youth workers and other staff provide support as needed and as requested.

Some ways of offering support and encouragement while young people take the lead include:

Mentoring – Mentoring is about meaningful dialogue between a young person (mentee) and a more experienced person (mentor) that supports them to develop on their chosen learning journey – in this case, the topic would be leading youth exchange projects.

MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning) meetings – Support young people in generating learning objectives for their own leadership role in the youth exchange project, and to identify monitoring and evaluation questions to help them understand what they are learning. Then support them in applying the knowledge gained through evaluation to improve their practice.

Peer reviews – Support young people in connecting with peer individuals/groups working in the same field who can help them to evaluate or provide feedback on their work and provide relevant insights.

Discovering how best to support young people

You can offer support to young people interested in initiating and implementing a youth exchange. If you have noticed in which areas they might need support, you can suggest those. They could also have different ideas about where they might need support. Discuss both and agree on a way forward. Those questions can be a starting point for discussing with young people:

What experience do you have with youth exchange?
As needed, you could explain the life-cycle of youth exchange as described in the Guide.
Which positive aspects would you like to keep and incorporate into the design of your youth exchange?
Which aspects would you like to avoid/prevent from happening in your youth exchange?

What experience do you have with the topic that you are interested in addressing?
What makes it exciting and important? How could you translate that in the design of the youth exchange?
Who could provide good input and advice on this topic?
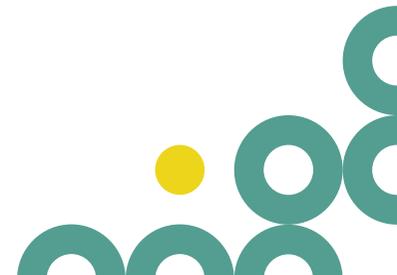
Discovering how best to support young people

Which areas overall are you still unsure about? Who do you think could support you and how?

You could refer to the life-cycle of youth exchange as described in the Guide and offer your support to them.
Make sure to outline under which conditions it could be provided (e.g. it could be offered at a specific time,
in relation to the finalisation of some other steps, only when they feel they need specific support and directly ask for it, etc.)

If different steps are not working the way you intended them; if the results are not there in the time frame that you had expected; if you feel powerless and are unsure if it all makes sense at all – remember that participation is about process! So whenever you feel uncertain, feel free to check in with young people about how they feel and how the process is working for them. It helps to realistically define what would be a success with particular young people that you are supporting in initiating and implementing youth exchange. Also re-define it along the way in constant dialogue with young people, as you both learn more and can assess better the scope and scale of the support needed. You can also consult the ◉ Young people leading projects module for more ideas!

Supporting young people in engaging beyond the youth exchange

If your youth exchange was developed in a participatory manner, or it was a participatory youth exchange 👁 How to involve young people, this means that the participating young people have already had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for future activities. This is a great basis on which to start thinking about the follow-up to your youth exchange.

Prepare young people for continued participation after the youth mobility project

Plan activities that would further encourage young people to participate in the democratic life of their societies even after the youth exchange. Depending on the group and topic of your youth exchange, you may want to consider:

organising meetings with the young people to explore their interest and plan their further engagement;

Prepare young people for continued participation after the youth mobility project

agree on ways to share information with the young people about campaigns and events in which they might be interested and could participate;

plan concrete follow-up activities with the young people through which they could raise their VOICE or take an ACTION.

Furthermore, you can indicate following opportunities to young people:

⊚ Erasmus+ and opportunities for starting a youth participation activity;
⊚ European Solidarity Corps and opportunities for implementation of other solidarity projects and/or volunteering activities;
The opportunities offered by ⊚ Eurodesk platform;
⊚ European Youth Portal and the opportunities for the participation in the ⊚ EU youth dialogue.

💡 **For greater impact and sustainability of the results of your youth exchange, check which international and national documents are there that can support your cause. You can look for specific European/national/local laws, policies, strategies, recommendations, declarations, action plans or any other public commitments in relation to the topic of your youth exchange. You could also look for key institutions in the field and utilise their youth programmes (or lack of) to support your cause.**

Where are you at now?

Self-assessment for youth exchanges

You can use this self-assessment tool even before you start developing your mobility project. It will help you to understand what you should pay attention to. Or after you have implemented youth exchange and used some of the tools proposed in this module – to assess how it worked for you.

Self-assessment for youth exchanges

Are all the project participants at the beginning of the project aware of their own participation needs and the possibilities offered through this youth exchange project?
If yes, how? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed? What could you do to inform them and support them in identifying their own participation needs?

How are young people supported in participating in decision-making about the youth exchange? Did you include a focus on:
inclusion and diversity,
digital transformation,
sustainability, environmental and climate goals?
If yes, how did it go? Could it be improved?
If not, how could that be changed?
What could you do to support young people's participation?

Are young people feeling competent to raise a VOICE and/or take an ACTION during the follow-up phase or even after the mobility project?
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to build their competences and/or confidence in this respect?

Self-assessment for youth exchanges

**Are young people motivated to raise a VOICE and/or take an ACTION
during the follow-up phase or even after the mobility project?
Have the young people indicated any interest in
initiating another youth exchange?**
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to spark their motivation?

**Are all the project participants at the end of the project
aware of their participation experience and learning
about youth participation through this project?**
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to support young people in understanding
their own experience and learning in regard to participation?

**Did you notice differences in the level or quality of participation
of the young participants in your youth exchange?
Were some participants more active and some less active?**
If yes, what were those differences?
Why do you think those differences exist?
What would need to happen in the context of a youth exchange to
change the level of participation of the less active participants?

**For the overall assessment and creation of quality youth exchanges, you can also check the 🛜 Q! App – a tool for the co-creation
of a quality youth project online with your partners or young people based on 16 logical project management questions.
Projects developed through this co-creation process can be easily exported for use in funding applications.**

Youth participation activities

Youth participation is a process in which power is shared with young people, whether in the context of decision-making or other processes involved in the project. Youth Participation Activities (YPA) aim to help young people engage and learn to participate. The youth participation process interlinks with the YPA life-cycle from the moment the idea for the YPA project is born through every step in the planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up.

Youth participation is about *ACTION* and *VOICE*, and Youth Participation Activity projects should focus on both of these.

ACTION - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them.

VOICE - Young people expressing their views with the aim of encouraging decision makers to make changes.

The tools in this module are focusing on:

How to create
a participation experience for young people in a Youth Participation Activity

How to ensure
the Youth Participation Activity is really designed to be inclusive and accessible to marginalised and excluded young people

How to make sure
the Youth Participation Activity contributes to greater youth participation after the YPA project

If you are not sure where to start, there are other people around you that might have experience in doing this kind of activity and who can offer you advice or answer your questions. They can be in your organisation, in some other organisations near you, in the National Agency for Erasmus+ Programme, online or perhaps already sharing their experience. Look them up and reach out to them with your questions and ask for support! Also, you can have a coach in the YPA project who can support you with this, as well.

How to create a participation experience for young people in a Youth Participation Activity?

An idea is born...

A good place to start is... at the very beginning.

When you have an idea for developing a Youth Participation Activity (YPA) project, your starting point could be to share your idea with your peer group, with the young people you are working with or with any concerned group of young people, using the participatory methods. Use any channel at your disposal to share this interest with young people:

- ✓ **face-to-face meetings** – check for meetings and activities organised in your area and attended by young people that you could use to share your idea;

- ✓ **social networks and online communication tools** – check if there are social media channels that address young people specifically (your organisation, or organisations around you might have one) and see if it could be used for sharing your idea;

- ✓ **info-boards** – check for info-boards in places visited by young people (youth clubs and other youth spaces, schools and educational centres, info centres, cultural spaces, etc.) and see how can you share your idea there;

Use your imagination and think about what young people or your peers will find most interesting. Think about why they would be motivated to join an YPA project, and ask them about that. When starting these conversations with young people, check their interest in participating. Encourage them to express their motivation, as well as their needs and any potential obstacles and fears that they might face. In the future, you will have to think and plan ways with them to address any identified obstacles and support needed for their participation.

💡 Be creative about how you present your idea. You can think of creating a story-board, poster, video, etc.

💡 As a youth group you could start by looking at the 🌐 EU Youth Goals and see if any of the topics there are related to the topic you are interested in pursuing with your YPA project.

The project is taking shape...

The participatory approach places the focus on the **process**. This changes the **power relations** between the project leaders, project staff and the participating young people. It also **increases the sustainability** of the project action beyond the end of the project because the young people continue to take responsibility and have developed their social, civic and political efficacy. Choosing a participatory approach is, therefore, a political act. It is important that the YPA project, in itself, is providing a participation experience to the involved young people in addition to the participation-related topic it will focus on.

Now, when you have a youth group, you will want to involve them in shaping your YPA project. Together, you will decide on the focus of the project and the issues related to youth participation that the group is going to address. You should also look at ways to make your YPA project a participatory experience.
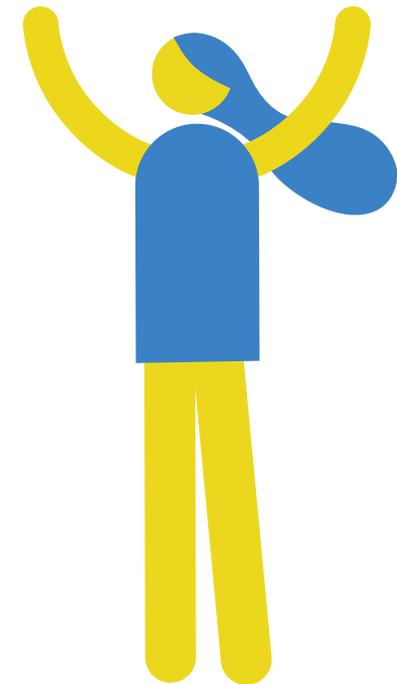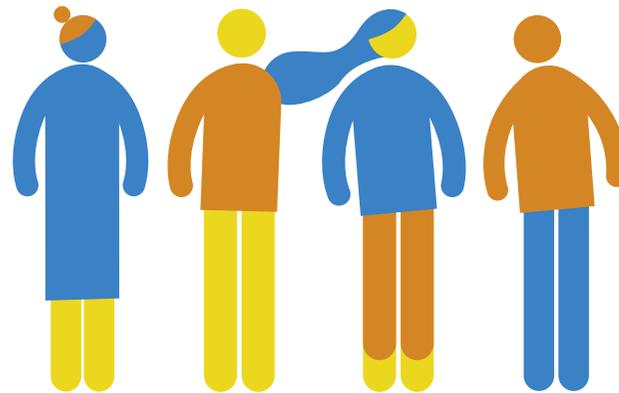
Designing participation experience

Your YPA project group wants to make a difference in youth participation in a certain identified area. While doing so, you will gain valuable experience in addressing issues related to youth participation and acquire a deeper understanding of what youth participation is about (check the 👁 What is youth participation? module for more details). With your YPA project group, you should decide what kind of participatory experience your YPA project should provide to all involved. There are many ways for young people to participate. What you do and how can also depend on the degree to which you feel confident and motivated to participate (check the 👁 Young people leading projects and 👁 Creating change modules for more details). This tool can help you decide on this. It can also help you to start looking at different programme elements you need to design into your joint project.

✎ Everyone in the YPA project group could answer the following questions:

Looking at different groups that you are part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions? ☐

Are you consulted about decisions? ☐

Are your ideas taken into account and are you able to influence the decision-making? ☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others? ☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions? ☐

Designing participation experience

_____

In which of those situations do you feel most comfortable?

_____

How would you like the decision-making power to be in your YPA project group?
Could you imagine challenging yourself and going for another degrees of participation compared to where you usually find yourself?

_____

Check the 🛜 Degrees of Participation and see where you feel confident and what you would like to experience, test and improve when it comes to different participation opportunities in this YPA project.

Based on what you have discovered and decided, you can review the programme of the YPA project and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing group members with participation experiences, in relation to their areas of interest, of course.

As your YPA project is taking shape and you have decided on what kind of participatory experience it should provide, you now want to make sure that each young person participating is aware of the opportunities and choosing the level of engagement that is most appropriate for them.

Evaluating your group's participation needs and interests

Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your YPA project to be, you can look into ways to understand and support each other to accomplish that. Everyone in the group could benefit from looking at the following questions and sharing their ideas:

Why are you interested in this YPA project?

What would you like to accomplish by joining this YPA project?

What might be a genuine obstacle to your involvement?

Evaluating your group's participation needs and interests

_____

What kind of support would you need to be able to fully participate?

_____

Could you invest in this activity if the support is provided?

_____

How much responsibility for the project would you feel confident to have?

Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that were shared in the group.
Perhaps you can support them in overcoming those. What kind of support could you offer to others in the group?

You can propose this tool to the coach. You could use it on your own as a group and then decide to share the results with the coach. In any case, do use all the support you need.

Depending on what your group has agreed about their participation, you could apply some of the following tools for informing, consulting and sharing decision-making with group members.

Informing and consulting group members

You would need an **information and/or consultation channel**. Agree with your group about which channel is most appropriate and then use this channel to inform and/or consult on any relevant milestones and issues.

Not sure what you need to consult on? The following are possible suggestions; however, it really depends on the specific YPA project, as well as the interests and competences of the group members involved.

Planning phase - Group members could share their opinions and jointly decide about:
identifying and defining the needs, objectives and learning outcomes – consider the youth participation related issues in your communities and your own participation needs and interests (check the tools 👁 Designing participation experience and 👁 Evaluating your group's participation needs and interests in this module).

Activity formats - consider innovation and out-of-box thinking while having in mind different learning styles and learning needs; also, consider different options by looking at accessibility, environmental footprint, digital aspects.

Schedule - consider the different learning styles and learning needs of each individual.

Informing and consulting group members

Preparing phase - Group members should consider and review all elements from the planning phase.
In this phase you should discuss how to bring in innovation, accessibility, sustainability, digital aspect and relevant youth participation thinking/practices to your YPA project. Identify resources you might need for this and ways on how to access them. Your group should discuss and jointly decide about the **detailed planning of activities, practical arrangements and set up of agreements with partners.**

Furthermore, you should finally **confirm the target groups for the envisaged activities.** This also involves informing and consulting them about their desired participation in the project. Their participation interests and needs might be different from what you may be thinking, or you might be right; in any case, you should look at creating the participatory experience for them as well (check the 🔘 Identifying participation needs tool in this module).

Once you have determined the participation needs of the young people that are the target group of your YPA project, you can address them through the **linguistic/intercultural/learning-related and task-related preparation of participants**. In addition to the linguistic, intercultural, learning and task-related preparation, a **preparation for participation** is also crucial. You shouldn't take for granted that participation comes easy and naturally to all young people. Providing an opportunity for meaningful participation experience is important, but it should be accompanied by adequate support. Designing adequate support and preparation of project participants for participation will be most successful when consulted and agreed together with participating young people (check the 🔘 Designing participation experience and 🔘 Evaluating your group's participation needs and interests tools in this module).

Informing and consulting group members

Implementation phase - Set up **daily reflection and evaluation meetings** to consult your YPA group members, and project participants, about the decisions you need to make regarding the programme and/or technical arrangements. Share inspiration moments and get ideas about how to share stories from the YPA project with other young people. Potentially, you can get ideas for other projects after the YPA project that you are implementing is completed.

Follow-up phase - YPA group members, as well as project participants, should share their opinions regarding the different elements to be implemented at this stage:
Evaluation of the activities – Consider also how to evaluate the participation experience they had through the YPA project.

Informing and consulting group members

Identification and documentation of the learning outcomes of participants – consider when and how to reflect about the planned learning outcomes and participation experience (check the ⊚ Group self-assessment for Youth Participation Activity projects tool in this module).

Dissemination and use of the project's outcomes - consider innovation and out-of-box thinking while also bearing in mind options that look at accessibility, environmental footprint, digital aspects Online tools and platforms for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group has no opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run up or during the activity. In this case, you could use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions.

Make sure to inform the project participants beforehand on the issue in question and the platform you are using, so that they can confidently participate in consultations. Bear in mind that there may be GDPR or internet security considerations to take into account when working with young people under the age of majority.

Sharing decision-making between project leaders and project participants

To share decision-making between your YPA youth group/youth organisation, project leaders and young people, as project participants in the YPA project it is important to (jointly) create a **decision-making model** that everyone feels is appropriate to both the project and the participating young people. The following models (and tools) can be presented to participating young people as a basis for discussion and deciding on which would work best for your YPA project.

Participatory model – all project participants are engaged in decision- making on given issues through dialogue, consensus building exercises or voting systems, whether face-to-face or online.
Online tools and platforms for online voting are ⊚ Polys, ⊚ Choice voting, ⊚ ElectionBuddy, ⊚ Helios-Voting, ⊚ Poll-maker, ⊚ Electionrunner, ⊚ Opavote (list created by ⊚ European Youth Forum).

Sharing decision-making between project leaders and project participants

Representative model – some project participants, who are either willing or wish to take up additional responsibility in the project, are elected by others to participate in the decision-making on their behalf, i.e. represent them.

Appointive model – project leaders offer interested young people a "seat at the table" by appointing one or more to participate in decision-making. In this case, those appointed may still consult with the group they are "representing". However, the chances they would feel the urge to do so, and that the group would feel represented, are lower than in other models.

For shared decision-making, a **Project steering committee** can be formed in the early stages of project planning.

Regardless of the model through which the project participants are involved in decision-making, you would need to make sure to inform them beforehand on the issue in question, so that they can confidently participate in the decision-making process. Informing them may include organising a specific face-to-face meeting and/or preparing material for them to read/watch/listen to.

The final step in making your YPA project a truly meaningful participation experience for your youth group is by supporting them to reflect about it and identify learning points. The following tool can help with that and provide insights to be used for 🔘 Youth Pass.

Reflection on learning about participation

You should plan reflection about your group's own participation and learning. Also you should provide the same opportunity for project participants. This will help you to understand whether your YPA project is contributing to a positive change in the participation of young people, especially the YPA project group and participants.

You could implement some of these strategies:

Schedule specific **reflection time slots** after major activities are organised as part of the YPA project and discuss your participation experience. Compare your experience with what you decided initially (🔘 Designing participation experience tool in this module).

Reflection on learning about participation

Schedule specific **reflection time slots** during major activities and support project participants in discussing their participation experience. Support them in comparing their experience with what they decided initially (◉ Identifying participation needs and interests tool in this module).

Propose that the group members and project participants create a **learning diary**. It can be in different forms – written in a notebook, scrapbook from activities with side notes and drawings, written in notes on a phone, recorded as audio or video on a phone, be physical or online in written, audio or video format, etc. A learning diary could serve as a good reference for discussions during reflection sessions or during meetings with a coach who is supporting you in implementing the YPA project.

💡 If there is a coach who is supporting you in applying and implementing the YPA project, they could potentially also offer further support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.

💡 Reflecting on one's own learning is a demanding task, and even more so if participants have never done anything like that before. Participants might show resistance or appear to struggle with the task. That is nothing out of the ordinary. It might make sense to make ongoing 'reflection on learning' an offer, something that participants can choose to do rather than an obligatory activity, but which the youth exchange provides infrastructure and support for. Keep in mind that participants will need support and time, and make sure they can access it. You can also consult the ◉ Learning by doing module for more ideas!

How to ensure the Youth Participation Activity is really designed to be inclusive and accessible to marginalised and excluded young people

Before you start » The inclusion of all young people in participatory processes is about supporting young people from all backgrounds and with different life experiences to access participation opportunities equally. Once involved, it is for them to have their voice heard and specific experiences shared, as well as to take action and assume leadership roles within a project.

Mapping who is left-out

You can start by considering which groups of young people are most likely to get left out when you plan, prepare, implement and follow-up your Youth Participation Activity (YPA) project.

Mapping questions:

Which young people are usually not involved in YPA projects?

Mapping who is left-out

_____

Which young people are not usually included in YPA projects on this topic?

_____

Which young people may have some interest in engaging with the topic of YPA project?

_____

Which young people would really benefit from YPA project experience, regardless of topic?

_____

In the community in which I do my youth work – with which groups of young people have I least contact with?
Which groups' realities, traits and backgrounds do I understand and know the least?

If you ask yourself 'How come?' after any of those questions,
you are already on the path to finding ways to involve excluded young people.

Reach out to the young people you have identified as at risk of being left-out and plan together their engagement with the YPA project. Reaching out is about making initial contact. Sometimes, it can be easier to get into contact with them in their comfort environment (their neighbourhood and places they visit and are comfortable with e.g. park, youth club/space, online social networks).

Identifying participation needs and interests
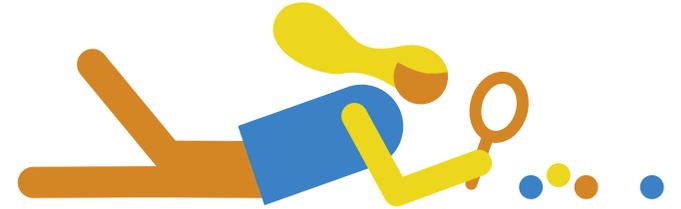
You should attempt to find out:

Would they be interested in joining your YPA project? *(As needed, start by explaining to them what the YPA project is)*

What are their participation needs? What might be an obstacle for their involvement?

Identifying participation needs and interests

_____

How could you support them in participating?

_____

How much would they like to/could they invest themselves in this youth exchange if the support is provided?

_____

Share with them the ☁ Degrees of Participation. Ask them about where they feel confident in engaging.
Also ask them what they would like to experience, test or improve when it comes to different participation opportunities?

How to make sure your Youth Participation Activity is contributing to greater youth participation after the YPA project?

Before you start » Participation is best learned through *experience* and *reflection*. You may want to share with young people some theory on ⊚ participation and degrees of engagement. However, the most important thing to remember when designing your Youth Participation Activity (YPA) project is that it must create conditions for young people's experiential learning and reflection about their own participation. Those young people can be both in your youth group in the role of project leaders and in the target group of your project in the role of project participants. Your YPA project can make a key difference in experience, understanding, capacity and motivation for youth participation for both of those groups.

Programme review

You can review the programme of the Youth Participation Activity to check if there is space in the design for session(s) that would add an experiential learning dimension in preparation for actual participation activities that the project is envisioning. For example, you could consider adding a simulation whose main focus is to provide project participants with a participation experience. This session can, of course, be adapted to the theme of your YPA project. There are many good reference manuals for participation specific activities that can be adapted to the topics of YPA projects, such as the ⊚ Have your say manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life; ⊚ Compass - Manual on Human Rights.

⚙ Programme review

Here are some examples of activities for experiencing participation:

_____

◉ Meeting the mayor (page 109): Participating young people prepare for the meeting with local authorities on the basis of a case study. In this activity, youth dissatisfaction is displayed through violent behaviour in public and conflicts with police. You can adapt the case study to be more relevant to the topic you are dealing with.

_____

◉ The triangle of co-operation – Confusion city (page 123): Participating young people take the roles of the local authority, young people and representatives of non-governmental organisation. They formulate their needs and interests and then engage in negotiation. In this activity, nine case studies are offered; however, you can adapt them to reflect the situation your YPA project is addressing.

_____

◉ Visit to Jeunessia (page 129): Participating young people envision the perfect community for youth participation. Depending on the focus of your YPA project, you can focus on certain aspects of youth participation and start the visioning process.

Programme review

_____

⊚ Simulation exercise "Youth in action" (page 131): Participating young people take on roles in a simulation of a consultation meeting organised by the mayor. In this activity, the mayor wants to initiate a process for setting up a local youth parliament, and various interest groups are invited to the consultations. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for your YPA project.

_____

⊚ Electioneering: Participating young people take positions on a statement (e.g. agree, disagree) and build arguments to explain their position. They also reflect on the arguments of others. In this activity, the statements are mainly about voting rights. You can adapt the statements to be more relevant for the topic you are dealing with.

_____

⊚ To vote or not to vote?: Participating young people go into the community to find out what community members think on any given subject. In this activity, the topic is voting. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant to your YPA project.

Programme review

⊚ **Let every voice be heard:** Participating young people engage in a discussion about what might need to be improved about a given topic. Then participants design a democratic system through which young people can have a say in bringing about the desired improvements. In this activity, the topic is education and young people having a say about the kind of education they are receiving. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for the topic you are addressing with the YPA project.

⊚ **On the ladder:** Participating young people reflect on the meaning of youth participation and discuss ways of increasing their own participation in the local community.

⊚ **A mosque in Sleepyville:** Young people take on roles in a simulation of a town council meeting. In this activity, the topic is freedom of religion and discrimination. You can adapt the topic and respective actors to be more relevant to your YPA project.

Supporting young people to initiate and implement a YPA project

Young people might initiate and implement a YPA project on their own, and you can offer them support and encouragement. In such cases, you will need to create opportunities for those young people to lead the project in its different stages of planning, preparing, implementation and follow-up. Youth workers and other staff can act as coaches and provide support as needed and as requested. 🌐 The programme guide envisages the role of coach/coaches for such a situation.

Some ways of offering support and encouragement while young people take the lead include:

Mentoring – Mentoring is about meaningful dialogue between a young person (mentee) and a more experienced person (mentor) that supports them in developing on their chosen learning journey – in this case, the topic would be leading YPA projects.
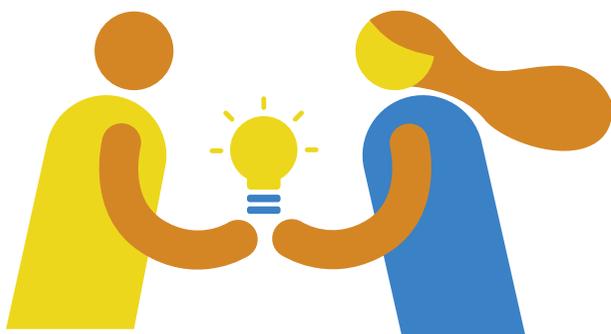
MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, learning) meetings – Support young people to generate learning objectives for their own leadership role in the YPA project, and to identify monitoring and evaluation questions that help them understand what they are learning. Then support them in applying the knowledge gained through evaluation to improve their practice.

Peer reviews – Support young people to connect with peer individuals/groups working in the same field who can help them to evaluate or provide feedback on their work and provide relevant insights.

Discovering how best to support young people

You can offer support to young people interested in initiating and implementing a YPA project. If you have noticed in which areas they might need support, you can suggest those. They could also have different ideas about where they might need support. Discuss both and agree on a way forward.

These questions can be a starting point for discussing with young people:

What experience do you have with YPA projects?
As needed you could explain the life-cycle of YPA project as described in the Guide.
Which positive aspects would you like to keep and incorporate in the design of your YPA project?
Which aspects would you like to avoid/prevent from happening in your YPA project?

Discovering how best to support young people

What experience do you have with youth participation and related topics that you are interested in addressing through your YPA project?

As needed, you could explain youth participation (check the ◉ What is youth participation? module)

and refer young people to explore this ◉ toolbox.

What makes it exciting and important?

How could you translate that in the design of the YPA project?

Who could provide good input and advice on this topic?

Which areas overall are you still unsure about?

Who do you think could support you and how?

You could refer to the life-cycle of YPA projects as described in the Guide and offer your support to them. Make sure to outline under which conditions it could be provided (e.g. it could be offered at a specific time, in relation to finalisation of some other steps, only when they feel they need specific support and directly ask for it, etc.)

> 💡 **If different steps are not working the way you intended them; if the results are not there in the time frame that you have expected; if you are feeling powerless and are unsure if it all makes sense at all - remember that participation is about process! So whenever you feel uncertain, feel free to check with young people about what they feel and how the process is working for them. It helps to realistically define what would be a success with particular young people that you are supporting in initiating and implementing a YPA project. Also re-define it along the way in constant dialogue with young people as you both learn more and can assess better the scope and scale of the support needed. You can also consult the ◉ Young people leading projects module for more ideas!**

A Youth Participation Activity project in its purpose and design ought to serve to encourage youth participation in Europe's democratic life. The following tool can help you assess and identify your YPA project's potential for impact.

Assessing the impact potential of your YPA project for participation

You can review the approach and programme of the YPA project and see if in the design you can address the issue of youth participation in Europe's democratic life. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them in taking an ACTION. An YPA project is in itself an ACTION type of participation for the group members involved. As a group, you can jointly think about adding some of the elements to your programme to engage more young people and give them a VOICE and/or support them in taking ACTION. Based on this assessment, you could engage more young people as project participants and further refine design in consultations with them.

Is your YPA project intending to provide young people with opportunities to engage and learn to participate in civic society (in regards to meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation)?
How will you do that? Think about ways of consulting young people about your plan and how the information could reach young people with fewer opportunities.

Assessing the impact potential of your YPA project for participation

Is your YPA project intending to raise young people's awareness about common European values including fundamental rights and contribute to the European integration process, including through contribution to the achievement of one or more of the 🌐 EU Youth Goals?
How will you do that?
Think about ways to motivate and support young people to raise their voice and/or to take action in relation to those topics?

Is your YPA project intending to increase young people's resilience to disinformation, fake news and propaganda and develop their digital competences and media literacy?
How will you do that? Think about ways to consult young people about your plan and how could you support them in reflecting on their learning.

Is your YPA project intending to bring together young people and decision makers at local, regional, national and transnational level and/or contribute to the 🌐 EU Youth Dialogue?
How will you do that? Think about understanding young people's participation needs and ways you can create a programme to help them prepare for such participation.

Assessing the impact potential of your YPA project for participation

Is your YPA project intending to map existing actors, resources and initiatives and seek synergies with them?
How will you do that? Think about all those actors in the specific field you are focusing on that you could initiate contact with and promote the concept of youth participation.

Are you planning to share the experience from your YPA project with other young people?
How will you do that? Think about which channels and means are the most appropriate for sharing information with young people that might be most interested in joining and/or initiating a YPA project. It would be good if you also add a short explanation about the opportunities offered by Erasmus+.

Your YPA project as a participatory activity might be developed in a ⊚ participatory manner, and this already means that involved young people had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for other such experiences.
When thinking about your YPA project's impact on youth participation you can look at the ideas for follow-up. You could plan activities that would further provide young people with opportunities to learn and experience, as well as to raise a voice and take action.

Planning next steps

After the YPA project, depending on your group experience and topics of your interest, you may think about:

Organising meetings with young people (both group members and project participants) to plan joint actions:
presenting your experience and learning from the YPA project to other young people;
raising your VOICE or taking an ACTION on the topic that interests all of you;
you could initiate and/or participate in another YPA project;
you could check 🔊 Erasmus+ and 🔊 European Solidarity Corps and opportunities for the implementation of other projects;
you could check the opportunities offered by the 🔊 Eurodesk platform;
you could check the 🔊 European Youth Portal and the opportunities for participation in 🔊 EU youth dialogue.
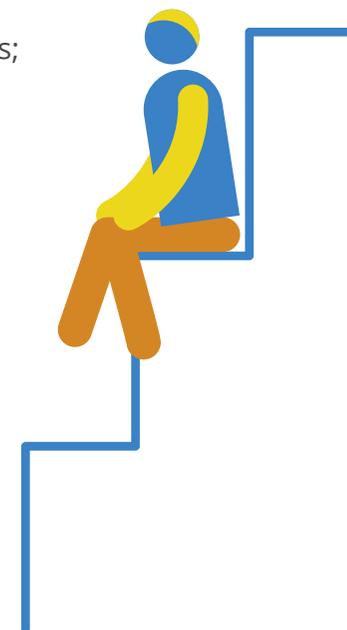
> 💡 **For greater impact and sustainability of the results of your YPA project, check which international and national documents are there that can support your cause. You can look for specific European/national/local laws, policies, strategies, recommendations, declarations, action plans or any other public commitments in relation to the topic of your YPA project. You could also look for key institutions in the field and use their youth programmes (or lack of) to support your cause.**

Planning next steps

Researching into youth organisations and initiatives that address the youth participation and other topics you find interesting and initiating contact with them to explore ways you could join and cooperate on some activities of interest;

Agreeing with young people to share information with each other about participation opportunities, as well as youth organisations and their initiatives, campaigns and events that you find and believe might be interesting to join and participate;

Exploring with a coach that supported you other ways in which they could support you and/or ways they would recommend for you to explore as potential next steps.

For greater impact and sustainability of the results of your YPA project, check which international and national documents are there that can support your cause. You can look for specific European/national/local laws, policies, strategies, recommendations, declarations, action plans or any other public commitments in relation to the topic of your YPA project. You could also look for key institutions in the field and use their youth programmes (or lack of) to support your cause.

Where are you at now?

Group self-assessment for Youth Participation Activity projects

You can use this self-assessment tool, both before you even start your Youth Participation Activity (YPA) project – to know what you should pay attention to – or after you have implemented it and used some of the tools proposed in this module, in order to assess how it worked for you.

How well do you as project leaders know what youth participation is?
Check it against what is explained in the 🛜 What is youth participation? module.

How well do you as project leaders understand the different degrees of youth participation?
With which do you have least experience?
Check it against what is explained in the 🛜 Young people leading projects module.

Group self-assessment for Youth Participation Activity projects

Are all project participants at the *beginning of the project* aware of their own participation needs and possibilities offered through this YPA project?
If yes, how? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to inform them and support them in identifying their own participation needs?

To what extent do you as project leaders feel competent to take ACTION (and raise a VOICE) during the YPA project? How come?
How about **after** the YPA project? What has changed for you?

Group self-assessment for Youth Participation Activity projects

**Are young people as a target group of your YPA project feeling competent
to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during the YPA project or even after?**
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to build their competences and/or confidence in this respect?

**Are young people as a target group of your YPA project feeling motivated
to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during the YPA project or even after?**
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to build their competences and/or confidence in this respect?

Group self-assessment for Youth Participation Activity projects

Are all project participants at the *end of the project* aware of their participation experience and learning about youth participation through this YPA project?
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to support young people in understanding their own experience and learning in regards to participation?

Did you notice differences in the level or quality of participation of the young participants in your YPA project? Were some participants more active and some less active?
If yes, what were those differences? Why do you think those differences exist?
What would need to happen in the context of a YPA project to change the level of participation of the less active participants?

Discover EU

Youth participation is about *ACTION* and *VOICE*, and Discover EU activities can focus on both of these things, or just one.

VOICE - Young people expressing their views with the aim of encouraging decision makers to make changes.

ACTION - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them.

The tools in this module focus on:

How to improve
participation through an individual Discover EU activity

How to create
participation experiences for young people in a group Discover EU activity

How to make sure
How to continue with youth participation after the Discover EU activity

> If you are not sure where to start and feel it might be too much for you alone, please bear in mind that there are other young people around you that might have experience in a Discover EU activity and that have gone through some of the issues you are now facing. They may well be near you in a local Eurodesk or EU Info Centre, at the 🌐 European Youth Portal or on the 🌐 DiscoverEU Official Facebook group. **Don't be shy to ask for support!**

How to improve participation through an individual Discover EU activity?

A good place to start is at the very beginning – once you've decided that you are interested in discovering the EU by traveling or by spending some time getting to know one or more countries that you've never lived in.

Designing participation experience

A good place to start is by exploring what youth participation is about (check the ⊚ What is youth participation? module for more details). Also, there is more than one way in which young people participate and to what degree they feel confident and motivated to participate (check the ⊚ Young people leading projects module for more details). The Discover EU activity can be a chance for you to experience, test, improve and explore different participation opportunities. This tool can help you decide on that and start thinking about different programme elements you need to design into your adventure.

Reflect upon the following questions:

Looking at different groups that you are part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions? ☐

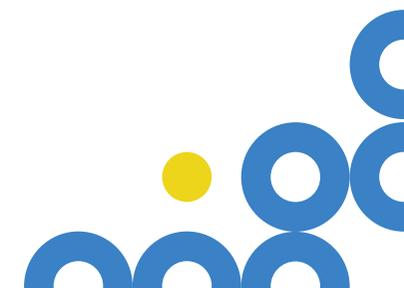Are you consulted about decisions? ☐

Are your ideas taken into account and are you able to influence the decision-making? ☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others? ☐

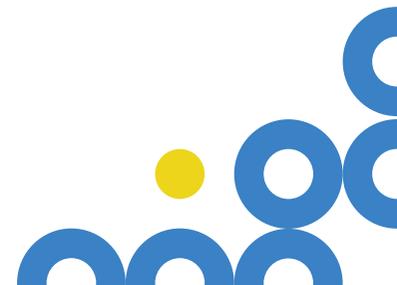Are you the one initiating and making the decisions? ☐

Designing participation experience

In which of those situations do you feel most comfortable?

**Would you like to change something?**

Designing participation experience

Based on what you have discovered and decided, you can review the programme of the Discover EU activity and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing you with participation experiences, in relation to your areas of interest, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following to your programme while in the localities you are visiting during the Discover EU activity:

_____

Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;

_____

Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;

_____

Asking EuroDesk and/or the EU Info Centre to support you in organising a meet-up with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest;
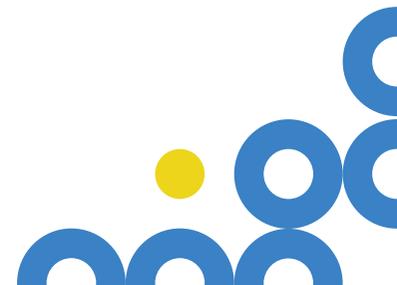
Evaluating participation needs and interests

Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your Discover EU activity to be, you can look into the support mechanisms at your disposal. Look at the following questions and document your ideas:

_____

Why are you interested in Discover EU?

_____

What would you like to accomplish by joining the Discover EU activity?

_____

What might be a genuine obstacle to your involvement?
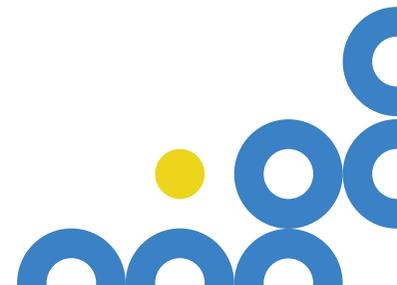
Evaluating participation needs and interests

_____

What kind of support would you need to be able to fully participate?

_____

How much would you like to/could you personally invest in this activity if the support is provided?

_____

Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that you have identified.
Perhaps you may address some of those on your own, and for some others you might need external support.
Who could you ask to help you overcome them?

How to create participation experiences for young people in a group Discover EU activity

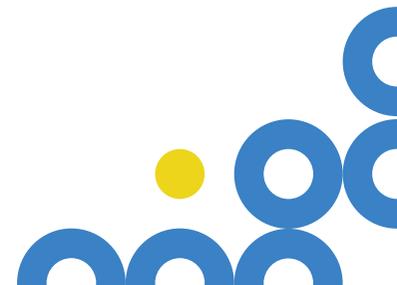There are different ways you can use the Discover EU programme – on your own or as part of a small group. If you are interested in Discover EU as part of a group, start by sharing your idea with your peers. There are various channels to do this, including face-to-face meetings, social networks, online communication tools and info-boards, among others, and you can also be creative in how you do it, including creating an Instagram story, poster or video. Use your imagination and think about what your peers will find most interesting. Think about what they would be motivated to discover in the EU, and ask them about that.
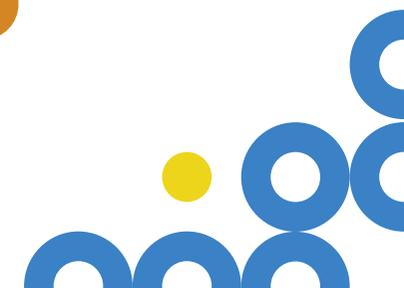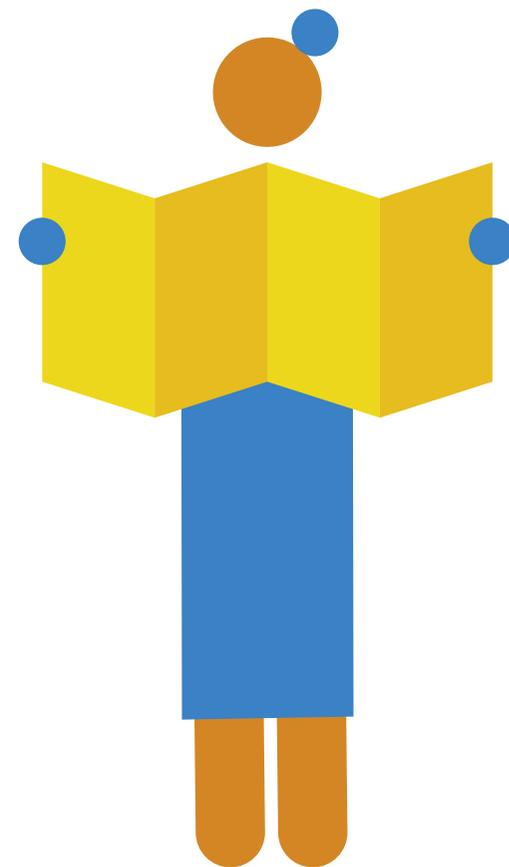
Designing a participation experience

In order for young people to have a meaningful participation experience, it is crucial that they first understand what youth participation is about (check the 👁 What is youth participation? module for more details). Also, there is more than one way in which young people participate and to what degree they feel confident and motivated to participate (check the Module 👁 Young people leading projects module for more details). With your Discover EU group you can decide if you want your Discover EU experience to be a participatory one. This tool can help you both to decide on that and to start thinking about different programme elements you need to design into your joint adventure.

Everyone in the group who is about to embark on a Discover EU project could reflect on the following questions:

Looking at different groups that you are part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions? ☐

Are you consulted about decisions? ☐

Are your ideas taken into account and you are able to influence decision-making? ☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others? ☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions? ☐

Designing participation experience

_____

In which of those situations you feel most comfortable?

_____

How would you like the decision-making power to be in your Discover EU group?
Could you imagine challenging yourself and going for other degrees of participation compared to where you usually find yourself?

_____

Check the 👁 Degrees of Participation and see where you feel confident and what you would like to experience, test and improve when it comes to different participation opportunities in this Discover EU activity.

Designing participation experience

Based on what you have discovered and decided, you can review the programme of the Discover EU activity and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing group members with participation experiences, in relation to their areas of interest, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following to your programme while in the localities you are visiting during the Discover EU activity:

_____

Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;

_____

Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;

_____

Asking EuroDesk and/or EU Info Centre to support you in organising a meet-up with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest;
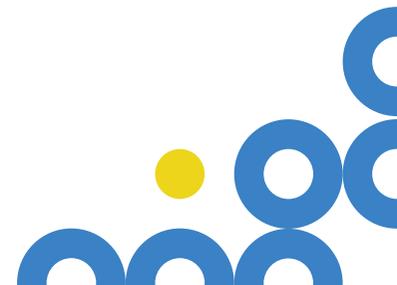
Evaluating group's participation needs and interests
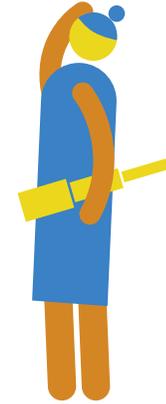
Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your group Discover EU activity to be, you can look into ways to understand and support each other to accomplish that. Everyone in the group could benefit from looking at the following questions and sharing their ideas:

Why are you interested in Discover EU?

What would you like to accomplish by joining the Discover EU activity?

What really might be an obstacle for your involvement?

Evaluating group's participation needs and interests

_____

What kind of support you would need to be able to fully participate?

_____

How much would you like to/could you personally invest in this activity if the support is provided?

_____

Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that were shared in the group.
Perhaps you can support them in overcoming those.
What kind of support could you offer to others in the group?

Depending on what your group has agreed about their participation, you could apply following tool for informing, consulting and sharing decision-making with group members.

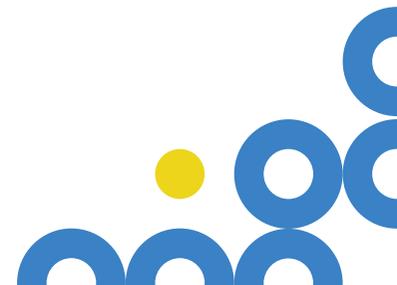# Informing, consulting and sharing decisions with group members

You need an **information and/or consultation channel**. Agree on the most appropriate communication channel and then use this channel to inform and/or consult on any relevant milestones and issues.

Not sure what to consult on? The following are possible suggestions; however, it really depends on the specific Discover EU activity, as well as the interest and competences of the involved group members.

Preparation phase - You could discuss important organisational and logistical decisions pertaining to the travel itinerary, venue, timetable, activities to undertake, sites to visit and more.

Implementation phase - You could set up a daily reflection meeting to talk about how things have gone that day and to reflect on participation experience and learning points. You can also use such a meeting to consult about decisions you need to make regarding the programme and/or technical arrangements of subsequent days. Furthermore, you could ask each other to share any inspirational moments and ask for ideas and interests in being involved in other activities after you have completed the Discover EU activity.

Online tools and platforms for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group does not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run-up or during the activity. In this case, you could use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions. Explore the participation resource pool to find more info about 🛜 internet safety.

How to continue with youth participation after the Discover EU

Your Discover EU activity might be developed in a participatory manner and/or may have been a participatory activity.
This already means that you had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for other such experiences.

In either case, you can start by looking at the ideas for follow-up of your Discover EU activity.
You could plan activities that would further provide you with opportunities to learn and experience, as well as to raise a voice and take action.

Planning next steps

After the Discover EU activity, depending on your group experience and topics of interest, you may think about:

Organising meetings with group members to plan joint actions:
present your experience and learning from Discover EU activity to other young people;
raise your VOICE or take an ACTION on the topic that interests all of you;
  you could check 👁 Erasmus+ and opportunities for
    starting a youth participation activity;
    initiating youth exchange on the topic of your interest;
you could check 👁 European Solidarity Corps and opportunities
for implementation of other solidarity projects and/or volunteering activities;
you could check the opportunities offered by 👁 Eurodesk platform;
you could check the 👁 European Youth Portal and the opportunities
for the participation in the 👁 EU youth dialogue.
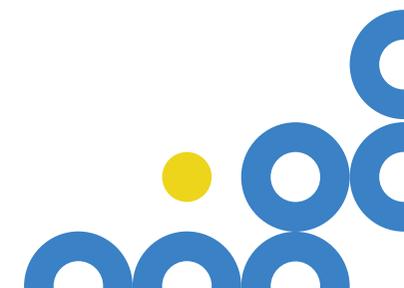
Planning next steps

Conducting research into youth organisations working on topics you find interesting and initiating contact with them in order to explore ways in which you could come together and cooperate on some activities of interest;

Agreeing with group members to share information with each other about youth organisations and their initiatives, campaigns and events that you find and believe might be interesting to join in and participate.
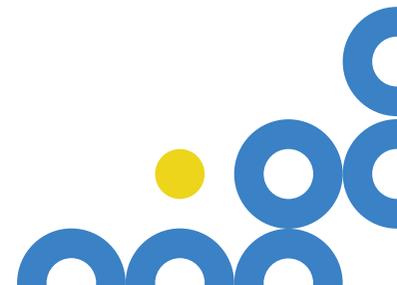
Where are you at now?

Self-assessment for Discover EU activity

You can use this self-assessment tool, both before you even start your Discover EU activity – to know what you should pay attention to – or after you have implemented it and used some of the tools proposed in this module, in order to assess how it worked for you.

Self-assessment for Discover EU activity

_____

How well do you know what youth participation is?

Check it against what is explained in the 🌐 What is youth participation? module.

_____

How well do you understand different degrees of youth participation?
What do you have least experience with?

Check it against what is explained in the 🌐 Young people leading projects module.

Self-assessment for Discover EU activity

_____

To what extend do you feel competent to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during the Discover EU activity?

_____

To what extend do you feel motivated to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during the Discover EU activity?

_____

To what extend do you feel motivated to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION after the Discover EU activity?

Solidarity Projects

Youth participation is about *ACTION* and *VOICE*, and while Solidarity Projects are primarily ACTION oriented, they could also focus on both of these things.

ACTION - Young people taking collective or individual action to make a change to the world around them.

VOICE - Young people expressing their views with the aim of encouraging decision makers to make changes.

The tools in this module focus on:

How to create
a participation experience for young people in a Solidarity Project

How to make a change
in youth participation through a Solidarity Project

How to continue
with youth participation after a Solidarity Project

If you are not sure where to start and feel this is all too much for you, please bear in mind that there are youth workers that can support you and other young people around you that might have experience with Solidarity Projects and that have gone through some of the same issues you are now facing. They can be in some other organisations near you, in the National Agency for the European Solidarity Corps programme and their project labs[1] , at the 🌐 European Youth Portal or elsewhere online, and are perhaps already sharing their experience. Look them up, reach out to them and ask for support! Also, in a Solidarity Project, you can have a coach and they can support you with this, as well.

[1] Activities aiming to support enabling potential applicants to hand in high quality applications in the frame of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

How to create a participation experience for young people in a Solidarity Project

A good place to start is at the very beginning – when you see something you would like to change in the community. You want to make a positive change and you have an idea for a Solidarity Project. Start by sharing this idea with your peers. There are various channels for this, including face-to-face meetings, social networks and online communication tools and info-boards, among others, and you can also be creative in how you do it, including creating an social media story, poster or video. Use your imagination and think about what your peers will find most interesting. Think about why they would be motivated to work on solving the challenges with a Solidarity Project, and ask them about that.

Designing participation experience

Your Solidarity Project group wants to make a difference. In that process you will gain valuable experience, and not only of solidarity. You will also gain experience of youth participation. For this experience to be meaningful, it is crucial that you understand what youth participation is about (check the 🎧 What is youth participation? module for more details). There are so many ways in which young people can participate. If motivated to participate and bring about changes, young people will find that a Solidarity Project can provide the right framework for them to gain meaningful experience (check the 🎧 Young people leading projects and 🎧 Creating change modules for more details). With your Solidarity Project group you can decide whether you want your Solidarity Project to be a participatory experience. This tool can help you decide on that and start you thinking about the different programme elements you need to design into your joint project.
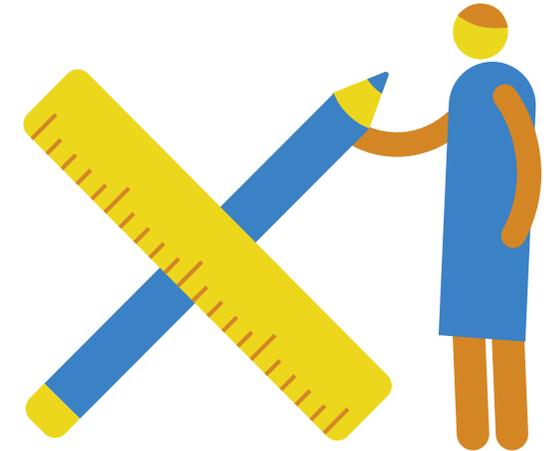
Looking at different groups that you are a part of – how would you describe your participation?

Are you informed about decisions? ☐

Are you consulted about decisions? ☐

Are your ideas taken into account and are you able to influence decision-making? ☐

Are you the one initiating and sharing the decision-making with others? ☐

Are you the one initiating and making the decisions? ☐

Designing participation experience

_____

In which of those situations do you feel most comfortable?

_____

How would you like the decision-making power to be distributed in your Solidarity Project group?
Could you imagine challenging yourself and going for a degree of participation other than the norm?

_____

Check the 🌐 Degrees of Participation **and see where you feel confident and what you would like to experience, test and improve when it comes to different participation opportunities in this Solidarity Project.**

Designing participation experience

Based on what you have discovered and decided you can review the programme of the Solidarity Project and see if in the design you can add elements that focus primarily on providing group members with participation experiences, in relation to their interests, of course. Participation should strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. You could think about adding some of the following elements to your programme, while implementing your project:

Visiting youth organisations and joining their activities in the areas of your interest;

Visiting youth events, initiatives and activities;

Asking a coach and/or an organisation that is supporting you, or a National Agency for European Solidarity Corps that could support you, to organise meet-ups with local young people to discuss issues of joint interest.
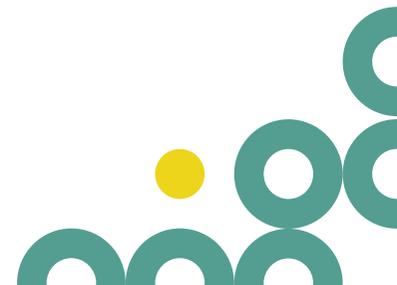
Evaluating group's participation needs and interests

Once you have decided what kind of participation experience you want your Solidarity Project to be, you can look into ways to understand and support each other to accomplish that. Everyone in the group could look at the following questions and share their ideas:

_____

Why are you interested in this Solidarity Project?

_____

What would you like to accomplish by doing this Solidarity Project?

_____

What might be a genuine obstacle to your involvement?

_____

What kind of support would you need to fully participate?
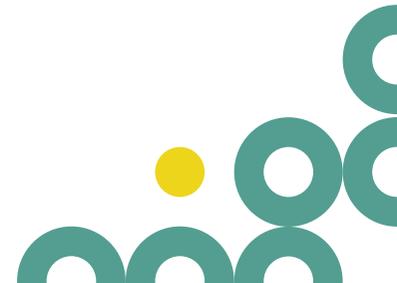
Evaluating group's participation needs and interests

_____

Could you invest in this activity if the support is provided?

_____

How much responsibility for the project would you feel confident to have?

_____

Consider the needs and any potential obstacles or fears that were shared in the group.
Perhaps you can support them to overcome those.
What kind of support could you offer to others in the group?

> 💡 **You can propose this tool to your coach. You could use it on your own as a group and then decide to share the results with the coach. In any case, do use all the support you need.**

Depending on what your group has agreed about their participation, you could apply some of the following tools for informing, consulting and sharing decision-making with group members.

Informing and consulting within group

You need an **information and/or consultation channel**. Agree within your group which channel is most appropriate and then use this channel to inform and/or consult each other on any relevant milestones and issues.

Not sure what you need to consult on? The following are possible suggestions; however, it really depends on the specific Solidarity Project, as well as the interest and competences of the involved group members.

Preparation phase - You could share with each other opinions regarding the concept of the Solidarity Project, as well as timetable of activities, the nature of activities to undertake, external communication and visibility, etc.

Implementation phase - Set up daily reflection and evaluation meetings to consult each other about decisions you need to make regarding programme and/or technical arrangements. Share inspiration moments and get ideas about how to share stories from the Solidarity Project with other young people. Potentially, you can get ideas for other projects after the Solidarity Project that you are implementing is completed.

Online tools and platforms for informing and consulting could be useful if the whole group has no opportunity to meet face-to-face in the run up or during the activity. In this case, use your chosen information/consultation channel and add pooling options, or as needed use other tools that have features for the easy collection of opinions. Explore the participation resource pool to find more info about 🌐 internet safety.

Reflection on learning about participation

As a group implementing a Solidarity Project, you could plan reflection about your own participation and learning. This will help you to understand if your Solidarity Project is contributing to positive change in the participation of young people, especially the project group. You could implement some of those strategies:

Schedule specific **reflection time slots** after major activities are organised as part of the Solidarity Project and discuss your participation experience. Compare your experience with what you had initially perceived to be the experience (⊚ designing participation experience in this module).

Propose to group members to create a **learning diary**. It can be in different forms – written in notebook, scrapbook from activities with side notes and drawings, written in notes on a phone, recorded as audio or video on a phone, physical (or online) in written, audio or video format. A learning diary could serve as a good reference for discussions during reflection sessions or during meetings with a coach and/or organisation that is supporting you in implementing a Solidarity Project.

💡 **If there is a coach and/or an organisation that supports you to apply and implement the Solidarity Project, they could potentially also offer further support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes.**

How to make a change in youth participation through your Solidarity Project?

Assessing the impact of your Solidarity Project for participation

Review the approach and programme of the Solidarity Project to see if you can address the issue of youth participation in the community in which you are implementing the project. Participation can strive to either give young people a VOICE or to support them to take an ACTION. A Solidarity Project is usually in itself an ACTION type of participation for the group members involved, so based on this assessment you could engage with other young people. You can think about adding to your programme some of the elements that would help engage more young people and give them a VOICE and/or support them to take ACTION.

Is your Solidarity Project intending to inform young people in the community about your plans and consult them on ways forward?
How will you do that? Think about which channels are the most appropriate for that particular community and how the information could also reach young people with fewer opportunities.
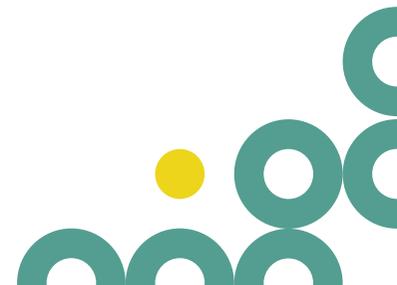
Assessing the impact of your Solidarity Project for participation

_____

Is your Solidarity Project intending to motivate and support young people in the community to raise their voice and/or to take an action?
How will you do that? Think about ways to understand their participation needs and how through your Solidarity Project you might support them in meeting them.

_____

Is your Solidarity Project intending to map existing actors, resources and initiatives and seek synergies with them?
How will you do that? Think about all those formal and informal leaders that you could initiate contact with and promote to them the concept of youth participation.

_____

Are you planning to share the experience from your Solidarity Project with other young people?
How will you do that? Think about which channels and means are the most appropriate for sharing information with young people that might be most interested to join and/or initiate a Solidarity Project.
It would be good if you also add a short explanation about the opportunities offered by European Solidarity Corps.

How to continue with youth participation after the Solidarity Project?

Your Solidarity Project might be developed in a participatory manner and/or it may have been a participatory activity (⊚ How to create participation experiences section in this module). This already means that you had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for other such experiences.

In either case, in the follow-up phase of your Solidarity Project you can already start by looking at the ideas. While you work on dissemination and present your experience and learning from the Solidarity Project to other young people, you could also think about the next steps. You could plan activities that would further provide you with opportunities to learn and experience, as well as to raise a voice and take action.
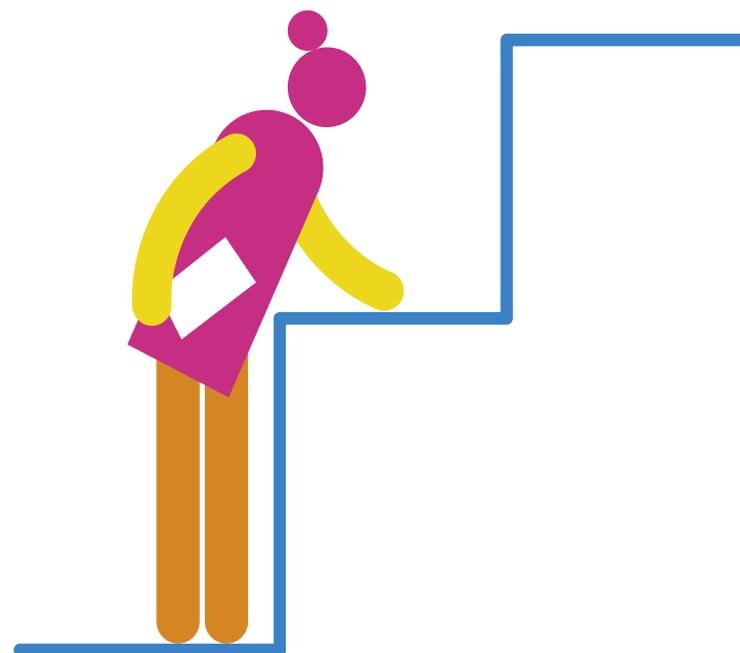
Planning next steps

After the Solidarity Project, depending on your group experience and interest topics, you may think about:

**Organising group meetings to plan how to raise your VOICE or take an ACTION
on the topic that interests all of you. You could:**
- initiate and/or participate in another Solidarity Project;
- check the European Solidarity Corps and opportunities for implementation of volunteering activities;
- check Erasmus+ and opportunities for:
  - starting a youth participation activity;
  - initiating youth exchange on the topic of your interest.
- you could check the opportunities offered by Eurodesk platform;
- you could check the European Youth Portal and the opportunities
  for the participation in the EU youth dialogue.

Planning next steps

Conducting research into youth organisations and initiatives that address the topics you find interesting and initiating contact with them in order to explore ways in which you could come together and cooperate on some activities of interest.

Agreeing with group members to share information with each other about youth organisations and their initiatives, campaigns and events that you find and believe might be interesting to join in and participate.

Exploring with a coach and/or an organisation that supported you about other ways they could support you and/or ways they would recommend for you to explore as potential next steps.

Where are you at now?

Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects

You can use this self-assessment tool, both before you even start your Solidarity Project – to know what you should pay attention to – or after you have implemented it and used some of the tools proposed in this module, in order to assess how it worked for you.

Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects

How well do you know what youth participation is?
Check it against what is explained in the 🌐 What is youth participation? module.

How well do you understand different degrees of youth participation?
What do you have least experience with?
Check it against what is explained in 🌐 Young people leading projects module.

Self-assessment for Solidarity Projects

To what extent do you **feel competent** to take ACTION (and raise VOICE) **during** the Solidarity Project? How come?

To what extent do you **feel motivated** to take ACTION (and raise VOICE) **during** the Solidarity Project? How come?

After the Solidarity Project
Do you feel motivated and competent to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION subsequently and on other issues?
How come?

Volunteering

Youth participation is a process in which power is shared with young people, during decision-making or other project processes. Youth participation is essential in both team and individual volunteering projects. The participation of volunteers should therefore be planned

The tools in this module are focusing on:

How to involve
volunteers in
implementing
a volunteering project

How to ensure
the volunteering project is really
designed to be inclusive and
accessible to young people with
fewer opportunities

How to support
volunteers so they may
'learn participation' during
the volunteering project

How to ensure
volunteering projects
are contributing to
more youth participation

If you are not sure where to start, there are youth workers around you that might have experience of doing this kind of activity and who can offer you advice or answer your questions. They can be in your organisation, in some other organisations near you, in the National Agency for European Solidarity Corps, online or are perhaps already sharing their experience. There are also people who volunteered through this programme before and have valuable experience. Some of them have come together in the 🌐 **Euro Peers network**. Look them up, reach out to them with your questions and ask for support!

How to involve young people in implementing volunteering projects?

Before you start » The participatory approach places the focus on the **process**. This changes the **power relations** between the project staff and the participating volunteers. It also **increases the sustainability** of the project action beyond the end of the project because the volunteers continue to take responsibility, and have developed their social, civic and political efficacy. Choosing a participatory approach is, therefore, a political act.

To maximise the participation of volunteers, you must have a good handle on your goals and overall project dynamic. For a start, you should make sure that volunteers are aware of the opportunities for participation that their volunteering project offers and that they actively choose the most appropriate level of engagement for them.
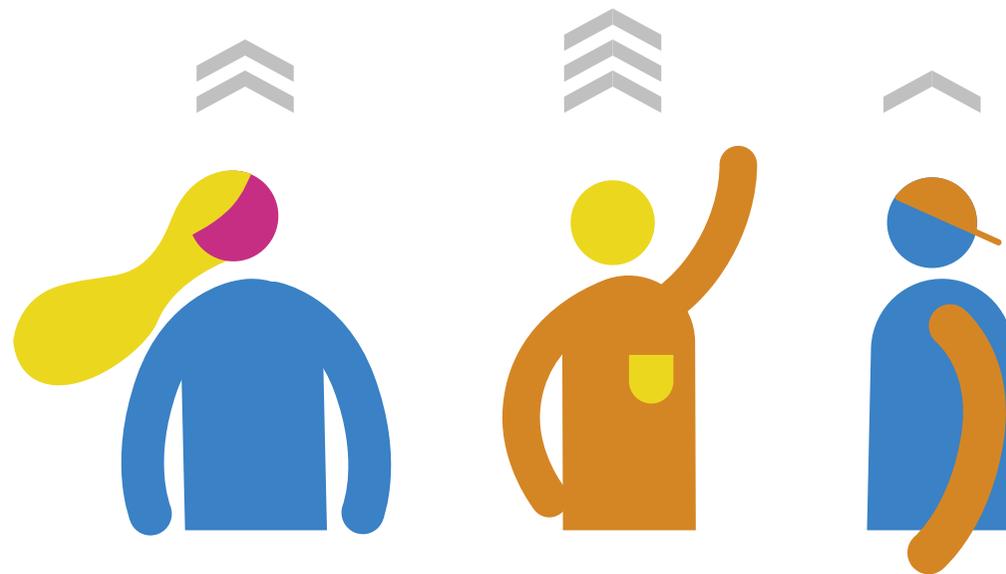
Evaluating Volunteers' Participation Needs

Support volunteers in understanding the opportunities for participation that are available in the context of the volunteering project. You could ask some of the following questions:

Why have they joined the volunteering project?

How much would they like to/could they invest in this volunteering project (ideas, skills, time)?

Share with them the 🌐 Degrees of Participation. Ask them about where they feel confident to engage. Also ask them what they would like to experience, test or improve when it comes to different participation opportunities?

> 💡 **Support volunteers in exploring their participation interests. They may be interested in engaging more, such as operating their own mini-projects during their volunteering time, e.g. with additional national funding or through an involvement in solidarity projects with local youth during their volunteering posting.**

Informing, consulting and sharing decisions with volunteers

To involve the volunteers in a timely and supportive manner,
it is important to have an **information and/or consultation channel.**

Agree with the volunteers on the channel that is most appropriate and then use this channel to inform and/or consult them on any relevant milestones and issues. To begin with, make sure the volunteers understand the programme they are joining, including its aims and why it was set up, its funding scheme, their rights and responsibilities as a volunteer and who is intended to benefit from their volunteering - the local community where they will volunteer, their local community when they return, Europe as a whole, the world and themselves! This is the shared responsibility of the supporting and hosting organisation, and it is best if both are involved.
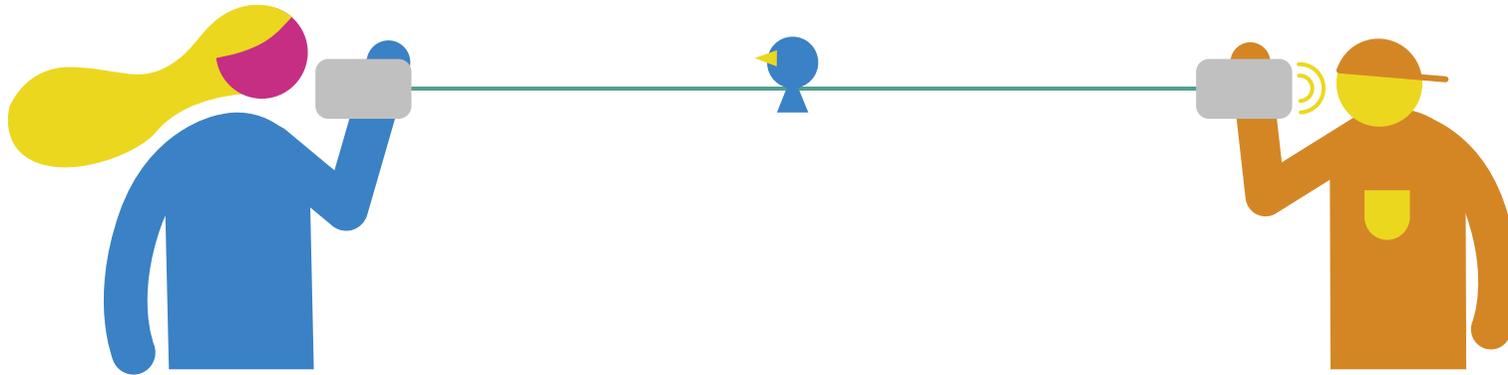
Not sure what to consult volunteers on and which decisions should be shared?
Here are possible suggestions. Note, however, that what to consult on really depends on the specific volunteering project, as well as the interest and competencies of the volunteers. You can also involve volunteers in the preparatory visit, so that they are better informed and involved from the beginning.

Informing, consulting and sharing decisions with volunteers

Preparation phase – You should involve volunteers in sharing their opinion and participating in the decision-making regarding:

Practical arrangements for travel and accommodation – support volunteers in considering different options by looking at accessibility, environmental footprint, digital aspects, costs and ways they would prefer to distribute the expenses.

Weekly Volunteer Timetable – support volunteers in considering their competences, interests and different learning styles and learning needs.

Volunteering agreement set up – support volunteers in sharing their expectations and considering the difference in expectations compared with the supporting and hosting organisation.

Preparation before departure – support volunteers in identifying and sharing their preferred learning styles and learning needs regarding linguistic, intercultural and task-related preparation.

Informing, consulting and sharing decisions with volunteers

Follow-up phase - You could involve volunteers in sharing their opinions regarding different elements to be implemented at this stage.

You may consider using **online tools and platforms** that have features for the easy collection of opinions, online polling, voting and visualisations, particularly in the case of volunteering teams. In that case, bear in mind that there may be GDPR or internet security considerations to take into account when working with young people under the age of majority. Explore the participation resource pool to find more info about 🛜 internet safety and also support volunteers in exploring on their own.

> 💡 **Make sure to inform volunteers beforehand on the issue in question and the platform you are using, so that they can confidently participate in consultations. Informing them may include organising a specific face-to-face meeting and/or preparing material for them to read/watch/listen to.**

> 💡 **Be open to considering and valuing innovation and out-of-box thinking that could emerge in the ideas, interests and needs expressed by a volunteer.**

Before you start » The inclusion of all young people in participatory processes is about supporting young people from all backgrounds and with different life experiences to access volunteering and participation opportunities equally. Once involved, it is for them to have their voice heard and specific experiences shared, as well as to take action and assume leadership roles within a volunteering project.

Mapping
who is left-out

You can start by considering which groups of young people are most likely to get left out when you plan your volunteering project. Share that information with your partner organisation.

Mapping questions:

Which young people are usually not involved in volunteering projects?

Which young people are not usually included in volunteering projects on this topic?

Mapping who is left-out

_____

Which young people may have some interest in engaging with the topic of the volunteering projects?

_____

Which young people would really benefit from experience in volunteering projects, regardles of topic?

_____

In the community in which I do my youth work – with which groups of young people have I least contact with?
Which groups' realities, traits and backgrounds do I understand and know the least?

Once you have your map, you can embark on finding ways to reach out and inform those young people of volunteering opportunities and involve them. Additional funding and support, as well as different rules about the length of a volunteering project, apply to facilitate the easier access of young people with fewer opportunities. Find out more in the ⊚ European Solidarity Corps programme guide.

You would need to work closely with your partner organisation responsible for supporting, preparing and training participants before departure. The supporting organisation could potentially reach out to the young people you have identified as at risk of being left out and plan together their engagement with the volunteering project. Reaching out is about making initial contact and finding out if they would be interested in joining your volunteering project. Sometimes, it can be easier to make contact with them in their comfort environment (their neighbourhood and places they visit and are comfortable with e.g. park, youth club/space) or online using channels they are comfortable with. Also, you might need to start by explaining what the volunteering project is and how they can register for the European Solidarity Corps.

Identifying participation needs and interests

At the early stages of preparation of a volunteer for departure and their arrival, you should attempt to find out what their participation needs and interests are. Also, unmet participation needs and interests could be the reason for a decline in your volunteer's motivation.

Discuss this and ask them:

_____

What are their participation needs?
What might be an obstacle for their involvement?

_____

How could you support them in their participation?

_____

Could they invest themselves in this volunteering project if adequate support is provided?

_____

Share with them the 👁 Degrees of Participation. Ask them about where they feel confident to engage. Also ask them what they would like to experience, test or improve when it comes to different participation opportunities?

How can we support young people so they may 'learn participation' during volunteering project?

Before you start » Participation is best learned through experience and reflection. Therefore, even though you may want to share with volunteers some theory on 💬 participation and degrees of engagement, the most important thing to remember when designing your volunteering project is that it must create conditions for the experiential learning and reflection of volunteers about their own participation.

🔧 Volunteer project review

You can review the design of the implementation phase of the volunteer project to check if there is space in the design of activities to add an experiential learning dimension. For example, you could consider adding an activity whose main focus is to provide volunteers with an experience of participation. This activity should, of course, be adapted to the theme and integrated in your volunteer project. Think about ways in which volunteers can share their VOICE or take an ACTION in relation to the topic of the volunteering project.

There are also many good reference manuals for participation specific activities that can be adapted to the topics of volunteering activity. One such manual is 💬 Compass - Manual on Human Rights. Here are some examples of activities for experiencing participation:

💬 To vote or not to vote?: Volunteers go into the community to find out what community members think on any given subject. In this activity, the topic is voting. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for your volunteering project.

Volunteer project review

 Let every voice be heard: Volunteers engage in discussion about what might need to be improved about a given topic. Together with people from the community where the volunteering project is taking place they design a democratic system through which young people can have a say in bringing about the desired improvements. In this activity, the topic is education and young people having a say about the kind of education they are receiving. You can adapt the topic to be more relevant for your volunteering project.

 On the ladder: Volunteers reflect on the meaning of youth participation and discuss ways of increasing their own participation in the project and in their host organisation and local community, as well as in their supporting organisation and other communities they belong to.

 A mosque in Sleepyville: In the case of volunteering teams, volunteers could take on roles in a simulation of a town council meeting. In this activity, the topic is freedom of religion and discrimination. You can adapt the topic and respective actors to be more relevant for your volunteering project.

> You could design a complementary activity for the volunteering project with the aim of raising awareness of the value of volunteering and youth participation for young people and for communities as well as at strengthening the recognition of the competences gained by the volunteers. As the European Solidarity Corps Guide envisions, complementary activities could include: job shadowing, meetings, workshops, conferences, seminars, training courses, coaching or something different where you focus on youth participation and volunteering.

Reflection to learning

To support volunteers in reflecting on their participation and learning, you could start by reviewing the role and place of the mentor in the volunteering project. Be excited about their role and the whole concept of reflection on participation and learning! You could implement some of the following strategies:
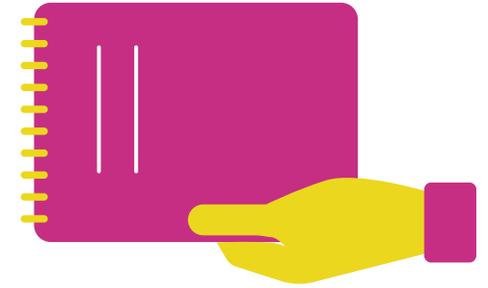
Allow for enough **reflection time slots** in the volunteering project design

💡 Reflecting on one's own learning is a demanding task, and even more so if volunteers have never done anything like that before. Volunteers might show resistance or appear to struggle with the task. That is nothing out of the ordinary. It might make sense to involve more than one mentor and make ongoing 'reflection on learning' an offer, something that volunteers can choose to do rather than an obligatory activity, but which the volunteering project provides infrastructure and support for. Keep in mind that volunteers will need support and time and make sure you offer that to them. You can also consult the 🌐 Learning by doing module for more ideas!

Reflection to learning

Propose that the volunteers create a **learning diary** that would be useful for their meetings with their mentor. It can take different forms – written in a notebook, scrapbook from activities with side notes and drawings, written in notes on a phone, recorded as audio or video on a phone, physical or online in any format they like, etc.

During **meetings between mentor and volunteer(s)**, ensure there is also a focus on learning around youth participation. The mentor could present the ⊚ Degrees of Participation to the volunteer and look at:
How they see their experience with participation in the volunteering project, until that moment?
Would they like to change something about it in the time to come?

How can we make sure our volunteering project is contributing to more youth participation?

Before you start » The volunteering project can focus on giving young people a VOICE, for example by organising a petition to the local council to ask for a youth space. Or it can strive to support them to take an ACTION, for example by organising a local fundraiser and the clean-up of an abandoned or empty space so they can transform it into a youth space. In either case, it is important to ensure that engaged volunteers in the volunteering project are also supported to have a VOICE and/or to take an ACTION. To learn more about VOICE and ACTION and about different forms of youth participation, go to the ⊚ What is youth participation? module.
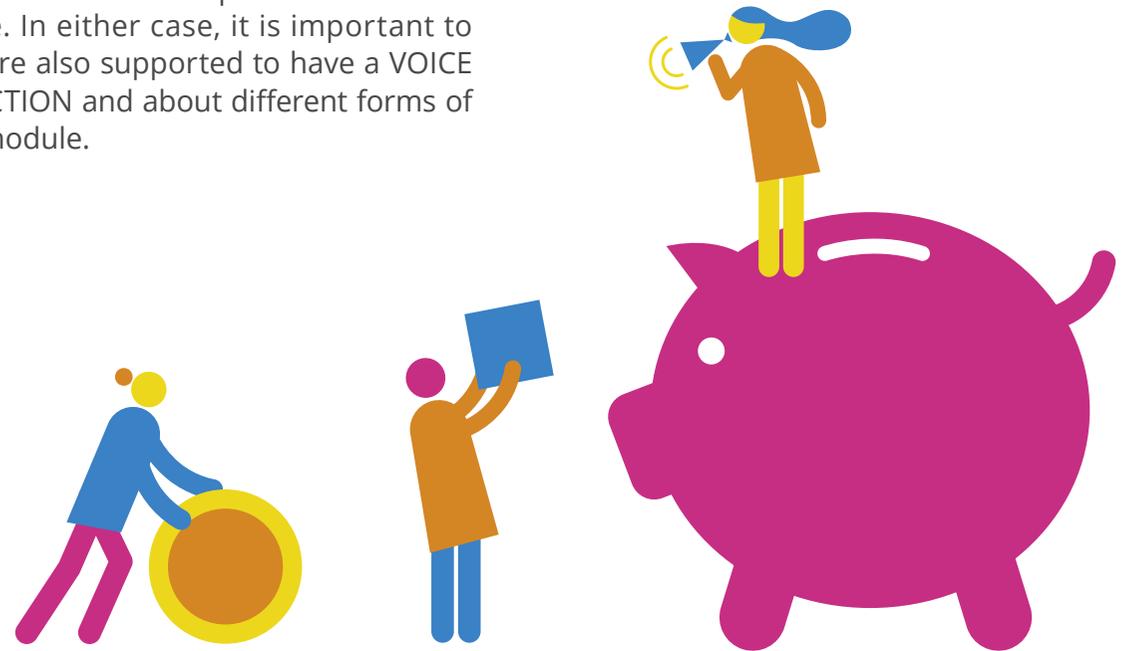
If your organisation has young people as a target group, you could also consider including them in the recruiting and selection process of the future volunteer. Such a participation experience could motivate them to participate further. The volunteer(s) would be selected in a participatory manner and their volunteering project could follow up on that and also focus on participation with those young people.

Supporting volunteers to take ownership of a volunteering project

Some volunteers might be looking to take greater ownership and lead on certain activities in the volunteering project; you can offer them support and encouragement. In such cases, you will need to create opportunities for them to lead in certain segments of the project in its different stages of preparing, implementation and follow-up. The coordinator, mentor and other staff provide support as needed and as requested.

Discovering how best to support volunteers

You can offer support to the volunteer in areas you have observed that they might need support. They could also have different ideas about where they might need support. Discuss both and agree on a way forward. Those questions can be a starting point for discussing the following with volunteers:

What experience do you have with leading and implementing the kind of activity you are interested in doing as part of this volunteering project?
Which positive aspects would you like to keep and incorporate in the design of your activity?
Which aspects would you like to avoid/prevent from happening in your activity?

Discovering how best to support volunteers

What experience do you have with the topic that you are interested in addressing?
What makes it exciting and important? How could you translate that into the design of your activity?
Who could provide good input and advice on this topic?

Which areas overall are you still unsure about?
Who do you think could support you and how?

Make sure to outline under which conditions your support could be provided (e.g. it could be offered at a specific time, in relation to the finalisation of some other steps, only when they feel they need specific support and directly ask for it, etc.)

If different steps are not working the way you intended them; if the results are not there in the time frame that you had expected; if you feel powerless and are unsure if it all makes sense at all - remember that participation is about process! So whenever you feel uncertain, feel free to check in with the volunteer about how they feel and how the process is working for them. It helps to realistically define what would be a success with particular volunteers that you are supporting in leading and implementing their activity within the volunteering project. Also re-define it along the way in constant dialogue with the volunteer, as you both learn more and can assess better the scope and scale of the support needed. You can also consult the ⊛ Young people leading projects module for more ideas!

Supporting volunteers in engaging beyond the volunteering project

If your volunteering project was developed in a participatory manner, or it was a participatory volunteering project (👁 How to involve young people - in this module), this means that the volunteers have already had a meaningful experience of participation that would set a standard for future activities. This is a great basis for volunteers to start thinking about their further participation in the democratic life of their societies after the volunteering project.

Meeting with mentor

Meetings with the mentor can be used to support volunteers in reflecting about the time when the volunteering project is completed. Encourage volunteers to look at their volunteering and youth participation experience and ask them to think about the future. You could use the 👁 Degrees of Participation – present it to volunteers and support them in looking at:

How they see their experience with participation in the volunteering project?
Are there elements that they would also love to maintain after the volunteering project is completed?

How they connect the participation experience from the volunteering project with their "back home" reality?
Are there elements that they could transfer to their "back home" reality?

Meeting with mentor

Would they like to change something about their participation in general?
What kind of support might they need with that? Discuss here what realistically
you and/or your partner organisation could offer, which might include:
   organising meetings with the volunteers to plan their further engagement;
   sharing information with the volunteers about campaigns and events in which they could participate;
   supporting volunteers in planning specific follow-up activities through which they could raise
   their VOICE or take an ACTION.

Furthermore, you can indicate following opportunities to volunteers:

🌐 Erasmus+ and opportunities for starting for instance a youth participation activity and/or youth exchange;
🌐 European Solidarity Corps and opportunities for implementation of solidarity projects;
The opportunities offered by 🌐 Eurodesk platform;
🌐 European Youth Portal and the opportunities for the participation in the 🌐 EU youth dialogue.

Where are you at now?

Self-assessment for volunteering projects

You can use this self-assessment tool even before you start developing your volunteering project. It will help you to understand what you should pay attention to. Or after you have implemented the volunteering project and used some of the tools proposed in this module – to assess how it worked for you.

_____

Are volunteers at the *beginning of the project* aware of their own participation needs and the possibilities offered through this volunteering project?
If yes, how? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to inform them and support them in identifying own participation needs?

_____

How are volunteers supported in participating in decision-making about the volunteering project?
Did you include a focus on:
   inclusion and diversity,
   digital transformation,
   sustainability, environmental and climate goals?
If yes, how did it go? Could it be improved?
If not, how could that be changed?
What could you do to support the participation of volunteers?

Self-assessment for volunteering projects

Are volunteers feeling competent to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during and/or after the volunteering project?
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to build their competences and/or confidence in this respect?

Are volunteers motivated to raise a VOICE and/or take ACTION during and/or after the volunteering project?
Have the volunteers indicated any interest in initiating their own project?
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to spark their motivation?

Self-assessment for volunteering projects

**Are volunteers *at the end of the project* aware of their participation experience
and learning about youth participation through this project?**
If yes, to what extent? Could that be improved?
If no, why not? Could that be changed?
What could you do to support understanding among volunteers
of their own experience and learning in regards to participation?

For volunteering teams specifically –
**Did you notice the differences in the level or quality of participation of the volunteers
in your volunteering project? Were some participants more active and some less active?**
If yes, what were those differences? Why do you think those differences exist?
What would need to happen in the context of a volunteering project to change
the level of participation of the less active participants?

12

Planning for participation

Youth participation requires both good intentions and continuous efforts on the part of those holding power. It strives for young people to be informed and competent in order to raise their VOICE and take ACTION.

The ☉ EU Youth Strategy and the European youth programmes:

☉ Erasmus+ and ☉ European Solidarity Corps provide a clear framework for enhancing youth participation. Supporting youth participation requires that projects are planned and designed with that aspect in mind, along with an explicit approach.

It is also about thinking about young people with fewer opportunities that might be excluded from participation, including through gaps in project design.
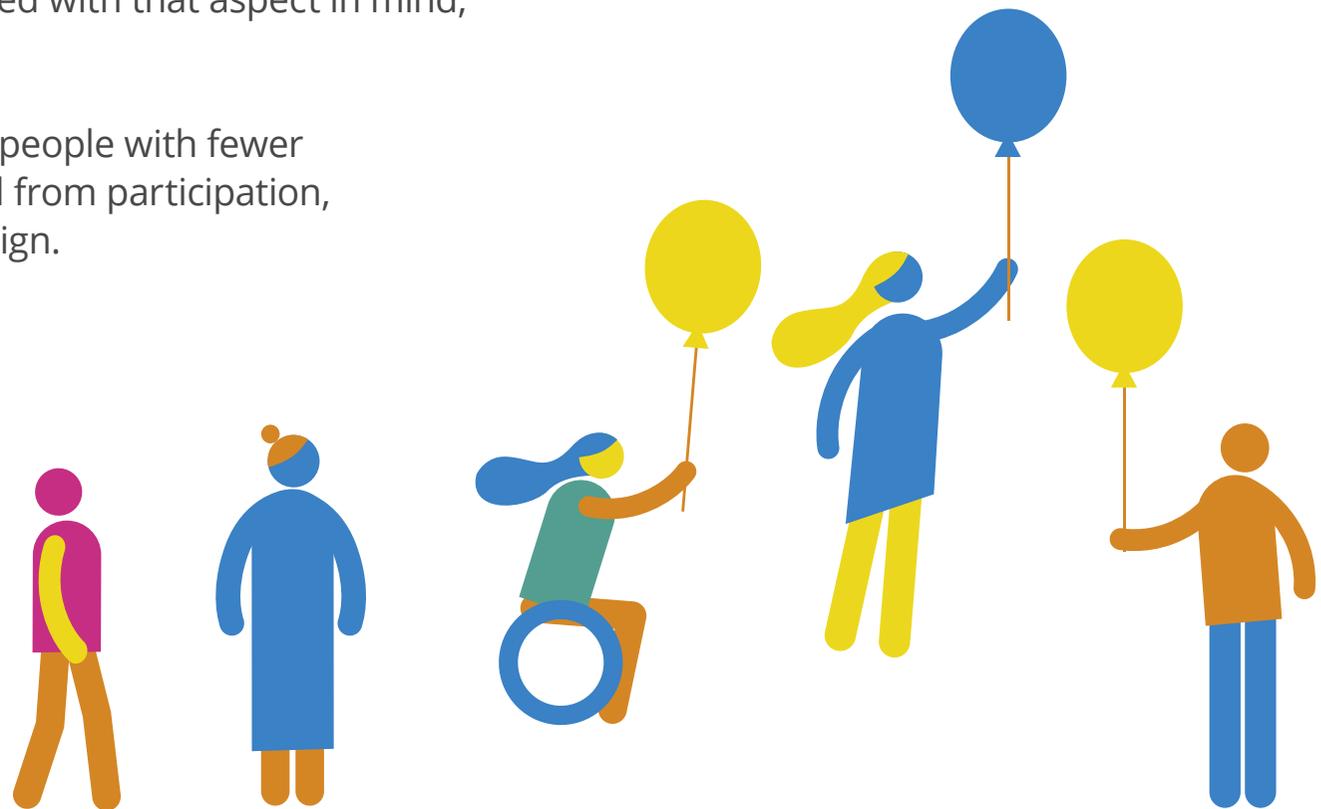
Participatory project design

The project is more likely to be relevant and enjoyable for young people when young people are involved in planning and decision-making. When planning projects with and for young people you could think about different aspects that would address barriers to participation and that could enhance their participation experience.

The following checklist could help you to make your project design and implementation more supportive of youth participation
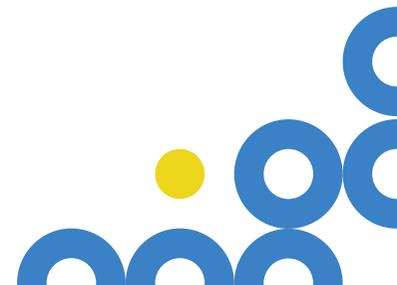
Is your project looking to encourage more youth participation in democratic life?
By encouraging young people to take part in traditional forms of participation?
By finding ways to make better use of alternative forms of participation?
(for more details check the 🔗 What is youth participation? module)

Participatory project design

Is your project looking to:

Engage youth groups that might not have been involved in your previous projects?

Provide additional support for those young people with fewer opportunities?

Promote a diversity of voices in your project outcomes?

Create opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities to take up leadership positions in the project? (for more details check the 🔊 Promoting participation for all module)

Is your project looking to support young people in:

Directing their own learning about participation?

Working together to identify collective action and strategies they wish to implement?

(for more details check the 🔊 Learning by doing module)

Is your project looking to involve project participants in decision-making within your project?

Is the process transparent?

Are the participating young people informed and supported in participating in decision-making processes within the project and more generally?

Are all project participants informed about the outcome of the decisions, as well as how and why they were taken? (for more details check the 🔊 Young people leading projects module)
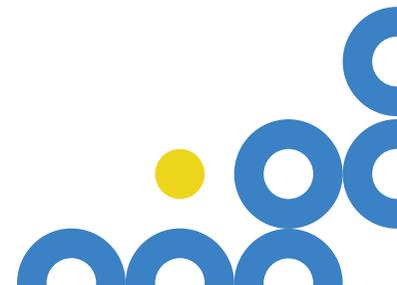
Participatory project design

Is your project looking to support young people in creating change?
Is it a VOICE project where young people advocate towards decision makers for change?
Is it an ACTION project where young people implement the change themselves?
Is it a project that somehow combines both? If yes, how does it create change?
(for more details check the ⦿ Creating change with projects module)

**Is your project looking to utilise digital tools and communication channels
in order to facilitate the greater interaction and participation of participants?**
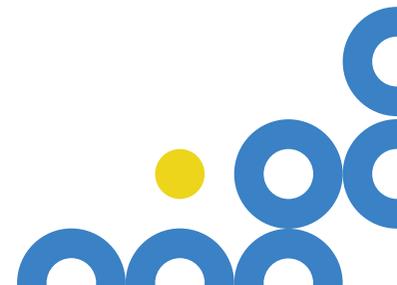Are you taking care of data protection issues?
Are you raising awareness about data protection issues among young people?

Is your project looking to avoid a negative environmental footprint?
Have you involved project participants in decision-making about the potential practical aspects of it?

Supporting all young people to participate

Not all young people would feel equally confident, would have the same opportunity and/or would be interested and willing to participate in your (or any) project. It is important to understand what the reason is and support young people accordingly. Possible options are:

_____

Individual and tailored approach to each young person – ask the young person why this is the case and what they need, which obstacles and fears they face, and what would be helpful;

_____

Providing relevant and timely information in an understandable manner and making sure it is understood;

_____

Engaging young people in smaller and less demanding tasks and building their ownership and responsibility over results gradually; etc.

_____

Making sure that the project's information and consultation channel is accessible to all, and, if not, searching (together) for alternative ways to make communication more inclusive.

Supporting all young people to participate

Checklist for *any material* that you are preparing for young people during your project:

Are you proposing relevant and user-friendly language(s)?
(Depending on your context you should see, for example, whether young people who have another mother tongue are able to understand?)

Is the visibility of different elements appropriate?
(Depending on your context you should determine, for example, whether young people who have visual impairments or hearing issues would be able to understand?)

Is information available in different formats?
(Depending on your context you should determine, for example, whether young people using reading software would be able to fully capture the information presented?)
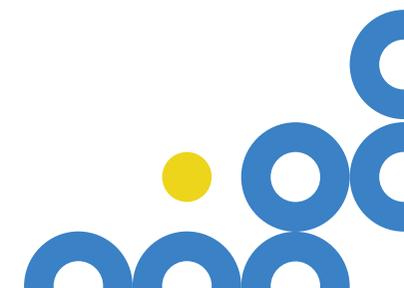
Supporting all young people to participate

Checklist for *activities* that you are preparing for young people during your project:

Do the **activities take the different learning styles of the participating young people into account?**
It is good practice to check with participating young people beforehand about their learning needs and learning styles. Not every activity needs to be all encompassing of all different learning styles, but throughout the project there should be a balance of activities that allow for people with different learning styles to engage.

☐

Are the activities appropriate for the different abilities of the participating young people?
It is good practice to check with participating young people beforehand about their abilities and confidence in certain types of activities (e.g. physically demanding ones). Make sure to adapt and revise activities to correspond best with the abilities of the project participants and to remain challenging and fun!

☐

Are the activities appropriate to the possible personal and inter-cultural sensitivities of the participating young people?
It is good practice to check with the participating young people beforehand about their attitudes towards certain types of activities (e.g. the ways they define boundaries and personal space in physical space – e.g. what is appropriate touch – and emotional space (e.g. which personal questions are not appreciated)). Make sure to adapt and revise activities to take into account the differences and, as appropriate throughout the project, also offer opportunities to the project participants to explore those further in order to understand them better.

☐

Are activities developed in co-creation with the participating young people?
It is good practice to check with the participating young people as to whether they would be interested and willing to co-create activities. If they are feeling confident and motivated, they might also want to lead and implement some of the activities. It is also good to offer such opportunities and support them in taking them.

☐

When you identify different groups of young people that might be or feel excluded, it may seem challenging to support their participation. Make sure to remember to take a step-by-step approach. Attempting to cover everything at once will make it difficult for participants to engage and for you to sustain support. Remain open to hearing and learning about different realities and backgrounds, and think about small steps and activities that can change specific things in real time. You can also consult the 🌐 Promoting participation for all module for more ideas!

Evaluating participation

Youth participation is not just something you can add to your project by inserting an activity here or there. A youth participation approach needs to be developed into the design. Participation is a process that needs to be integral to the project. This can be achieved by involving participants and project staff in continued reflection and revision/adaptation of activities, so that participation is possible for everyone. During project implementation, and at the end of the project, the following questions can be used to help project participants and project staff reflect on their participation experience and that of others.

Understanding and learning about participation

To what extent do the project participants feel more knowledgeable about their rights in democratic systems?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel they were supported in directing their own learning during the project?
How come? What would help to improve this?

Evaluating participation

Experience of participation in the project

To what extent do the project participants feel they were supported in participating in the project?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel their voice and the diverse voices of other participants were important and taken into account within the project?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel they were supported in identifying collective action and strategies they wished to implement during the project?
How come? What would help to improve this?

Evaluating participation

To what extent do the project participants feel they were supported in identifying collective action and strategies they wished to implement during the project?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the participants feel the project used digital tools and communication channels to facilitate greater interaction and participation among the participants?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel data protection issues were appropriately addressed during the project and that they themselves are now more aware of them?
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel the project was environmentally appropriate?
Did they feel that they were able to influence this?

Evaluating participation

Readiness for participation beyond project

**To what extent do the project participants feel more empowered to take part in traditional and/or alternative forms of participation now?**
How come? What would help to improve this?

To what extent do the project participants feel they were empowered to raise their voice and to lobby decision makers for change and/or to take an action and implement the change themselves?
How come? What would help to improve this?
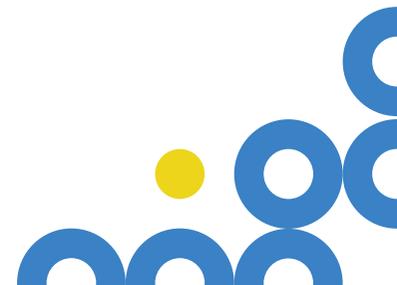
Assessing quality youth participation dimension of your project

This youth participation self-assessment questionnaire[1] was conceived as an online tool for project applicants primarily. The tool is practice oriented and can be used for different projects, in different contexts, at different stages (in their planning, during their implementation and in their final evaluation) and for different target groups.

You should plan, adapt and eventually complement its use by taking into consideration all of these circumstances.

	Ranking	Does not apply to my project
The project aims to support young people to be or become civically active in their communities and realities. The project considers the living conditions and realities young people face. The project has clear aims, one of them being to support young people's active engagement. Young people can address issues of common concern through the project.	★★★★★	🚫
The project supports young people in expressing their views, contributing to and/or influencing developments in their communities and social contexts on matters affecting them. The project provides a safe space and encourages young people to express their views to promote changes and improve the life of their communities. Although the project, organisers and participants capture the results, exploited them and document inspiring practices/practices to learn from. Already at the setup of the project, it is planned how to maximise the impact of the project (e.g. visibility tools, working towards useable results or products, etc.).	★★★★★	🚫

[1] Developed by Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez for SALTO Participation & Information

Assessing quality youth participation dimension of your project

	Ranking	Does not apply to my project
Young participants throughout the different phases and activities of the project have the right, the means, the space, and the opportunity to participate in decisions about it. The participatory approach is considered from the beginning and consequently carried on during the whole project. Young people are supported in expressing their views on the development of the project through their input in a regular and participatory evaluation. The methodological approach facilitates that young people are involved not just in the decisions regarding project implementation but also in the decisions about its outcomes and community impact.	★★★★★	🚫
The project includes outreach work to involve a wider and more diverse range of young people. Youth people from different backgrounds are included as participants and beneficiaries of the project. Media and information literacy and communication of the participation possibilities of young people are addressed The visibility tools and the tangible results take into consideration the diversity of the possible ultimate target groups of the project.	★★★★★	🚫
The project contributes to the development of young people's competencies for youth participation. The learning activities are adequate; they respond to the young participants' learning needs for participation. Learning to participate (within and beyond the project) is part of its intangible outcomes of the project. Some competencies for youth participation (analytical skills, critical thinking, communication skills, digital skills, leadership and teamwork skills, organisational and project management competencies…) are developed.	★★★★★	🚫

Assessing quality youth participation dimension of your project

	Ranking	Does not apply to my project
The project contributes to the capacity building of the youth sector to support youth participation. The results and outcomes of the project are a contribution to the youth sector in its efforts to promote youth participation. The organisations involved learn from the project how to strengthen youth participation in the future. The setting of (new) strategies, the creation of innovative tools or new approaches, the setting of platforms… strength the youth sector in promoting youth participation.	★★★★★	🚫
The project enables young people to be civically active and/or to be involved in public decision-making. The participation of young people in public decision-making processes is part of the expected outcomes of the project. The long term civic engagement of young people, beyond the project itself, is promoted. Specific tools and strategies for civic engagement are explored; for example, advocacy campaigns, social movements or the new Erasmus+ Youth Participation action.	★★★★★	🚫
The project is based on a genuine analysis that includes the needs and aspirations of young people, in their contexts, on issues affecting them. The daily concerns and aspirations of young people are at the genesis of a project. There is a genuine needs analysis conducted by young people in their own contexts in relation to the project topics. The global analysis and/or the European priorities are not parachuted over young people's realities.	★★★★★	🚫
Europe is critically explored as a space of and for youth participation. The mutual influences between the European policies and the local realities are explored during the project. Young participants can become (more) "active European citizens"; they are informed and are able to take a position on European issues affecting them. European policies, particularly youth policy and others that have an impact in their lives (i.e., education, employment…) are thematised in the project.	★★★★★	🚫

Assessing quality youth participation dimension of your project

	Ranking	Does not apply to my project
The methods and procedures of the project enable and encourage the real and meaningful participation of young people. Beyond the interactivity of non-formal methods, the methods and procedures stimulate the contribution of young people. The methods and procedures allow the input of young people in relation to the contents, agenda, strategies, methods and outcomes of the project. The input of young people, gathered through the different methods and procedures, is carefully considered in the planning and in the next steps of the project.	★★★★★	🚫
Young people, according to their level of involvement in the project, become involved in the key decisions of the project. Young people have a say in the management of the project; on the timing, format of activities, human and financial resources… Young people are informed about the key decisions in the project and those are discussed with them… The input of young people is considered in these key decisions; for example, after a mid-term evaluation, or at the end of a certain phase or when unforeseen circumstances demand an adaptation or change…	★★★★★	🚫
The multiplication and follow-up activities open up new opportunities and spaces for youth participation. The multiplication and follow-up activities through the different phases of the project promote youth participation beyond the scope of the project. New platforms, stakeholders, initiatives and organisations are considered in the follow-up activities for encouraging youth participation. Multiplication and follow-up activities are done not just "for others" but "with others" based on common concerns and aspirations.	★★★★★	🚫